



RAMPA

WORLD OF ILLUSIONS

With An Introduction By Tim Swartz

Book Three: The Rampa Story

Book Four: Cave Of The Ancients

Compiled and Edited by William Kern

KP_{co}



KERSON PUBLISHING COMPANY



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The complete and corrected text of Rampa's third and fourth books:

**The Rampa Story
and
Cave of the Ancients
With an Introduction by Tim Swartz**

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RAMPA: WORLD OF ILLUSIONS

This new book contains the complete and corrected text of two Rampa books: ***The Rampa Story*** and ***Cave of the Ancients***

Rampa's amazing journey continues as he escapes from a Japanese prison at the end of World War Two and travels into Russia, Western Europe, Canada and eventually back to Britain where he settles and takes the body of an Englishman!

He then travels to America to fulfill more of his appointed "task" of teaching the West about the aura and the healing powers of meditation.

Rampa then leads us to the Cave Of The Ancients where are stored the greatest secrets of humankind, all viewed through the Akashic Record during out-of-body experiences and telepathic journeys.

COMPILER'S NOTE: Two of Rampa's books are contained in this single volume. The texts were carefully proofed to correct a number of scanning and editing errors which have been found in nearly all editions of the books that were republished after the originals went out of print. Duplicated paragraphs, sentences and paragraphs that were misplaced, and spelling errors have been corrected to provide today's interested readers with the most complete and accurate editions of Rampa's books that it is possible to produce.

EXAMINING THE STRANGE WORLD OF DR. T. LOBSANG RAMPA

by Tim Swartz

It was a time when people were questioning their beliefs. Christianity and organized religion seemed stagnant and out of touch with a new generation who were seeking spiritual truths rather than undefined platitudes. People were seeking answers, but no one knew what the question was.

The time was ripe for a new beginning, and from the other side of the world a fresh breeze was blowing that would herald in a new age of understanding for teachings that were thousands of years old, but offered a new hope for those who were looking for ultimate truth.

In 1956 *The Third Eye* hit the stands with an amazing story that was allegedly the autobiography of a young Tibetan noble, Tenzin Lobsang Rampa, who, at the age of seven was sent to the Chakpori medical lamasery. *The Third Eye* details Rampa's early life at Chakpori where he was taught the secrets of Tibetan religion and the mystical arts. Rampa's own psychic abilities were helped to develop when he underwent an operation of the third eye, in which a hole was drilled in his forehead. This dangerous procedure opened a closed up part of the brain to the energies of the universe, releasing its potential and enabling it to grow beyond the boundaries of physical reality.

The Third Eye was an almost instant success. In the first year it sold over 60,000 copies and was translated into German, French and Norwegian. Even though skeptics universally panned the book, the public was eager to read about the exotic secrets of Tibet and the ancient ways of Eastern philosophy and religion.

In the 1950s Tibet was in the headlines due to the Chinese invasion of Eastern Tibet in 1949, and their total annexation of the country in 1951. Before that time little was known about the Himalayan country, its people and their beliefs. But as people fled before the Chinese occupation, they brought with them their rich customs which fanned the flames of interest in the West about anything Tibetan.

A WORLD IN TURMOIL

The release of *The Third Eye* could not have come at a more perfect time. World War Two was still fresh in the minds of Europeans who had borne the brunt of the worst that

humankind could perpetuate upon itself. The Church offered little solace to those who survived and were left to wonder how a God who was supposed to be watching out for the world could allow such horrible things to happen. It seemed as if everything that people had been brought up to believe in, to trust, had let them down. Governments, leaders, the Church, had done nothing to stop the horrors of war, and in fact appeared to embrace the evil with no regard to those who would suffer the most.

People were disillusioned with authority. The Church preached “have faith,” but could really offer no other answers to why the world was as it was. In fact, the Church blamed the victims on why bad things happen. “All men are born with original sin” said the Ministers. “It does not matter how good you are or how many good and unselfish deeds you do; you are born a sinner and will die a sinner.” This is hardly inspirational words to those who are seeking real answers.

The Third Eye, however, revealed a whole new world to those seekers. It offered a spiritual and philosophical system that resonated in a way that Christianity and Western ideals did not. Even more appealing, it offered an easy access point for those Western minds dulled by years of materialism and instant gratification that might not have been able to grasp the intricacies of Eastern mysticism.

The Third Eye allowed a whole new generation to learn that there is more to this world, this universe, than had been taught to them by modern science and traditional Christianity. It started a new movement of understanding that is still with us today. All thanks to one controversial writer.

CONTROVERSY

It was not long before controversy embroiled the Rampa movement. Perhaps due to The Third Eyes popularity, there were those who felt it was their duty to bring down the growing movement before it threatened the Church and possibly political systems. A group of scholars living in Britain were certain that Rampa was a fraud, so they hired a detective by the name of Clifford Burgess to determine the validity of Rampa’s tale. It is now known that this effort was financed by a group representing not only the Church of England, but also high level British Government officials who were worried that interest in Eastern religions would undermine democracy in the Western world.

Clifford Burgess discovered that T. Lobsang Rampa had never been to Tibet, nor had he ever had any operation done to his forehead. Instead Rampa was actually Cyril Henry Hoskins, born in Devon, England, and son of a plumber named Joseph Henry Hopkins.

When the press confronted Hoskins with this revelation, Hoskins freely admitted that he had never “physically” been to Tibet. In reply to his critics, Rampa stated: “The Third Eye is absolutely true and all that I write in that book is fact. I, a Tibetan lama, now occupy what was originally the body of a Western man, and I occupy it to the permanent and total exclusion of the former occupant. He gave his willing consent, being glad to escape from life on this earth in view of my urgent need. One should not place too much credence in ‘experts’ or ‘Tibetan Scholars’ when it is seen how one ‘expert’ contradicts the other, when they cannot agree on what is right and what is wrong, and after all how

many of those ‘Tibetan scholars’ have entered a lamasery at the age of seven, and worked all the way through the life as a Tibetan, and then taken over the body of a Westerner? I HAVE.”

The public, however, continued to believe in Rampa and to buy his books. Rampa’s subsequent books give more details of experiences which he encountered after the period covered by *The Third Eye*. He included stories about Chinese atrocities against Tibetan monks and lamas, ancient civilizations, encounters with the Yeti, gilded mummies of an extraterrestrial super-race, and hidden cities deep within lost caverns. What makes Rampa’s books especially popular is his practical esoteric teachings from which the ordinary person can learn and develop spiritually.

In his later books, Rampa even wrote about UFOs and life on other planets. Two controversial books are *My Visit to Venus*, originally published by Gray Barker, and *My Visit to Agharta*, published by Inner Light Publications. Both of these books have been criticized by Rampa’s followers who are unaware of his interest in UFOs and extraterrestrials. However, those familiar with his later writings are certain that both books were written by him, but were possibly withheld from publication due to their controversial nature. Only by reading the books can the reader make the judgment for themselves.

Truth is, very few of the Rampa books were ever made available in the U.S.; with several exceptions the majority of them were printed and distributed solely in the U.K. where Rampa made his home most of his life. Now deceased for well over two decades his works have been largely ignored by an entirely new generation of metaphysically and occult minded readers. It was only through the foresight of dedicated publishers that a decision was made to bring a few of Rampa’s most controversial works to this “side of the pond” so that open minded readers might tackle the ideas that the lama put forth.

These initial works included, *The Third Eye*, *The Hermit*, *Doctor From Lhasa*, *Feeding The Flame*, *The Rampa Story*, *Living With the Lama* and *Cave of The Ancients*.

In keeping with Rampa’s traditional values and to quell a continued thirst for more of his books, it is time to shed more light onto a darkening world with the release of ***TWILIGHT; HIDDEN CHAMBERS BENEATH THE EARTH*** in which Rampa reveals the reality of the Inner Earth, a subject few dared to tackle in his lifetime.

Always a provocative topic, Rampa discusses how a belief in the Hollow Earth is part of the Buddhist philosophy beginning with the idea that there is actually a King of the underworld. Publisher William Kern has promised reissue other of Rampa’s earlier works if there is sufficient demand for those books.

“Hopefully,” says the publisher, “the two-in-one books, ***Between Two Worlds, World of Illusions and Secrets Of The Ages*** will start a new trend and there will be a clarion call to bring Rampa’s works back into print. Perhaps this will start a new movement of spiritual seekers eager to move away from the world where terrorism, first strike initiatives, end time fanatics, global pollution and rampant materialism has replaced the inner peace and harmony that Rampa saw as our birthright.”

We can say with certainty that Rampa’s works are ageless and his wisdom is needed

now more than ever. He saw a New Age emerging, and perhaps we can still promote his vision of a Brave New World.

COMPILER'S NOTE: Two of Rampa's books are contained in this single volume. The texts were carefully proofed to correct a number of scanning and editing errors which have been found in nearly all editions of the books that were republished after the originals went out of print. Duplicated paragraphs, sentences and paragraphs that were misplaced, and spelling errors have been corrected to provide today's interested readers with the most complete and accurate editions of Rampa's books that it is possible to produce.

We will continue to proof and correct earlier editions of Rampa's books and hope to produce at least 19 of them by the end of 2012.

RAMPA'S AMAZING JOURNEY CONTINUES as he escapes from a Japanese prison at the end of World War Two and travels into Russia, Western Europe, Canada and eventually back to Britain where he settles and takes the body of an Englishman!

He then travels to America to fulfill more of his appointed “task” of teaching the West about the aura and the healing powers of meditation.

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WORLDS OF ILLUSION

THE INCREDIBLE TRUTH

Few books have aroused more controversy in recent years than Lobsang Rampa's *THE THIRD EYE*, and the other works which have come from his pen.

The reason is simple enough. When an Englishman claims that his body has been taken over by the spirit of a Tibetan Lama, he can reasonably expect mockery. When, in addition, he recounts extraordinary, highly detailed experiences which presuppose the possession of personal powers quite outside the laws of nature as we understand them, the reaction not surprisingly becomes an uproar.

But uproars of this kind do sometimes spring from ignorance. To glimpse what was previously unknown is always disturbing. The fact that Dr. Rampa now has many thousands of readers throughout the world is evidence that not all minds are closed against the unfamiliar.

It is for this great body of readers-and, no less, for the skeptics who have been able neither to disprove his story nor to explain how he came by his knowledge if his story is untrue-that Dr. Rampa wrote this, his third book.

THE RAMPA STORY is Lobsang Rampa's reply to all his critics, and every page carries his own unswerving guarantee of the truth.

DEDICATED

to my friends in Howth, Ireland

They were my friends when the “winds blew fair.” They were loyal, understanding, and greater friends when the unfair winds blew foul, for the people of Ireland know persecution; and they know how to judge Truth. So-

Mr. and Mrs. O’Grady

The Loftus Family

Dr. W. I. Chapman

and

Brud Campbell

(to mention just a few)

THANK YOU!

(Published in 1960)

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

"No bitterness," said Mr. Publisher.

"All right," I thought to myself, "but why should I have any bitterness? I am merely trying to do my job-writing a book as directed."

"Nothing against the Press!" said Mr. Publisher. "Nothing!!"

"Dear, dear," I said to myself "What does he take me for?"

So it shall be. Nothing against the Press. After all, they think they are doing their job, and if they are fed incorrect information, then I suppose they cannot be held wholly responsible. But my idea about the Press? Tut, tut, No. Nothing more about the subject.

This book follows on from *The Third Eye*, and from *Doctor from Lhasa*. At the very outset I am going to tell you that this is Truth, not fiction. Everything that I have written in the other two books is true, and is my own personal experience.

What I am going to write about concerns the ramifications of the human personality and ego, a matter at which we of the Far East excel.

However, no more Foreword. The book itself is the thing!

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THE RAMPA STORY

CHAPTER ONE

The jagged peaks of the hard Himalayas cut deeply into the vivid purple of the Tibetan evening skies. The setting sun, hidden behind that mighty range, threw scintillating, iridescent colors on the long spume of snow perpetually blowing from the highest pinnacles. The air was crystal clear, invigorating, and giving almost limitless visibility.

At first glance, the desolate, frozen countryside was utterly devoid of life. Nothing moved, nothing stirred except the long pennant of snow blowing high above. Seemingly nothing could live in these bleak mountainous wastes. Apparently no life had been here since the beginning of time itself

Only when one knew, when one had been shown time after time, could one detect, with difficulty, the faint trace that humans lived here. Familiarity alone would guide one's footsteps in this harsh, forbidding place. Then only would one see the shadow-enshrouded entrance to a deep and gloomy cave, a cave which was but the vestibule to a myriad of tunnels and chambers honey-combing this austere mountain range.

For long months past, the most trusted of lamas, acting as menial carriers, had painfully trudged the hundreds of miles from Lhasa carrying the ancient Secrets to where they would be forever safe from the vandal Chinese and traitorous Tibetan Communists. Here too, with infinite toil and suffering, had been brought the Golden Figures of past Incarnations to be set up and venerated in the heart of a mountain. Sacred Objects, age-old writings, and the most venerable and learned of priests were here in safety. For years past, with a full knowledge of the coming Chinese invasion, loyal Abbots had periodically met

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in solemn conclave to test and pick those who should go to the New Home in the far distance. Priest after priest was tested, without his knowledge, and his record examined, so that only the finest and most spiritually advanced should be chosen. Men whose training and faith was such that they could, if need be, withstand the worst tortures that the Chinese could give, without betraying vital information.

So, eventually, from a Communist overrun of Lhasa, they had come to their new home. No aircraft carrying war loads would fly this high. No enemy troops could live off this arid land, land devoid of soil, rocky and treacherous with shifting boulders and yawning chasms. Land so high, so poor in oxygen, that only a hardy mountain people could breathe. Here, at last, in the sanctuary of the mountains, was Peace. Peace in which to work to safeguard the future, to preserve the Ancient Knowledge, and to prepare for the time when Tibet should rise again and be free of the aggressor.

Millions of years ago this had been a flame-spewing range of volcanoes erupting rocks and lava over the changing face of the young Earth. The world then was semi plastic and undergoing the birth-pangs of a new age. Over countless years the flames died down and the half molten rocks had cooled. Lava had flowed for the last time, and gaseous jets from the deep interior of the Earth had expelled the remnants into the open air, leaving the endless channels and tunnels bare and empty. A very few had been choked by rock falls, but others had remained intact, glass hard and streaked with traces of once-molten metals. From some walls trickled mountain springs, pure and sparkling in any shaft of light.

For century after century the tunnels and caves had remained bare of life, desolate and lonely, known only to astral-traveling lamas who could visit anywhere and see all. Astral travelers had scoured the country looking for such a refuge. Now, with Terror stalking the land of Tibet, the corridors of old were peopled by the elite of a spiritual people, a people destined to rise again in the fullness of time.

As the first carefully chosen monks wended their way northwards, to prepare a home within the living rock, others at Lhasa were packing the most precious articles, and preparing to leave unobtrusively. From the lamaseries and nunneries came a small trickle of those chosen. In small groups, under cover of darkness, they journeyed to a distant lake, and encamped by its bank to await others.

In the "new home" a New Order had been founded, the School of the Preservation of Knowledge, and the Abbot in charge, a wise old monk of more than a hundred years, had, with ineffable suffering, journeyed to the caves

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within the mountains. With him had traveled the wisest in the land, the Telepathic Lamas, the Clairvoyants, and the Sages of Great Memory. Slowly, over many months, they had wended their way higher and higher up the mountain ranges, with the air becoming thinner and thinner with the increasing altitude. Sometimes a mile a day was the most their aged bodies could travel, a mile of scrambling over mighty rocks with the eternal wind of the high passes tearing at their robes, threatening to blow them away.

Sometimes deep crevices forced a long and arduous detour. For almost a week the ancient Abbot was forced to remain in a tightly closed yak-hide tent while strange herbs and potions poured out lifesaving oxygen to ease his tortured lungs and heart. Then, with superhuman fortitude he continued the appalling journey. At last they reached their destination, a much reduced band, for many had fallen by the wayside. Gradually they became accustomed to their changed life. The Scribes carefully penned the account of their journey, and the Carvers slowly made the blocks for the hand printing of the books.

The Clairvoyants looked into the future, predicting, predicting the future of Tibet and of other countries. These men, of the utmost purity, were in touch with the Cosmos, and the Akashic Record, that Record which tells all of the past and of the immediate present everywhere and all the probabilities for the future. The Telepaths too were busy, sending messages to others in Tibet, keeping in touch telepathically with those of their Order everywhere—keeping in touch with Me!

“Lobsang. Lobsang!” The thought dinned into my head, bringing me back from my reverie. Telepathic messages were nothing to me, they were more common to me than telephone calls, but this was insistent. This was in some way different. Quickly I relaxed, sitting in the Lotus position, making my mind open and my body at ease. Then, receptive to telepathic messages, I waited. For a time there was nothing, just a gentle probing, as if “Someone” were looking through my eyes and seeing. Seeing what? The muddy Detroit River, the tall skyscrapers of Detroit city. The date on the calendar facing me, April 9th, 1960. Again—nothing. Suddenly, as if “Someone” had reached a decision, the Voice came again. “Lobsang. You have suffered much. You have done well, but there is no time for complacency. There is a task for you yet to do.” There was a pause as if the Speaker had been unexpectedly interrupted, and I waited, sick at heart and wholly apprehensive. I had more than enough of misery and suffering during the past years. More than enough of change, of being hunted, persecuted.

As I waited I caught fleeting telepathic thoughts from others nearby. The girl tapping her foot impatiently at the bus stop below my window, “Oh, this

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bus service, it's the worst in the world. Will it never come?" Or the man delivering a parcel at the house next door: "Wonder if I dare ask the Boss for a rise? Millie will sure be mad if I don't get some money for her soon!" Just as I was idly wondering who "Millie" was, much as a person waiting at a telephone thinks idly, the insistent Inner voice came to me again.

"Lobsang! Our decision is made. The hour has come for you to write again. This next book will be a vital task. You must write stressing one theme, that one person can take over the body of another, with the latter person's full consent." I started in dismay, and almost broke the telepathic contact. Me write again? About that. I was a "controversial figure" and hated every moment as such. I knew that I was all that I claimed to be, that all I had written before was the absolute truth, but how would it help to rake up a story from the lurid Press's silly season? That was beyond me. It left me confused, dazed, and very sick at heart, like a man awaiting execution.

"Lobsang!" The telepathic voice was charged with considerable acerbity now; the rasping asperity was like an electric shock to my bemused brain. "Lobsang! We are in a better position to judge than you; you are enmeshed in the toils of the West. We can stand aside and evaluate. You have but the local news, we have the world."

Humbly I remained silent, awaiting a continuation of the message, agreeing within myself that "They" obviously knew what was right. After some interval, the Voice came again. "You have suffered much unjustly, but it has been in a good cause. Your previous work has brought much good to many, but you are ill and your judgment is at fault and warped on the subject of the next book."

As I listened I reached out for my age-old crystal and held it before me on its dull black cloth. Quickly the glass clouded and became as white as milk. A rift appeared, and the white clouds were parted like the drawing aside of curtains to let in the light of the dawn. I saw as I heard. A distant view of the towering Himalayas, their tops mantled in snow. A sharp sensation of falling so real that I felt my stomach rising within me. The landscape becoming larger, and then, the Cave, the New Home of Knowledge. I saw an Aged Patriarch, a very ancient figure indeed, sitting on a folded rug of yak wool. Although a High Abbot, he was clad simply in a faded, tattered robe, which seemed almost as ancient as he. His high, domed head glistened like old parchment, and the skin of his wrinkled old hands scarce covered the bones which supported it. He was a venerable figure, with a strong aura of power, and with the ineffable serenity which true knowledge gives.

Around him, in a circle of which he was the center, sat seven lamas of high degree. They sat in the attitude of meditation, with their palms face-up

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and their fingers entwined in the immemorial symbolic clasp. Their heads, slightly bowed, all pointed towards me. In my crystal it was as if I were in the same volcanic chamber with them, as if I stood before them. We conversed as though almost in physical contact.

“You have aged greatly,” said one.

“Your books have brought joy and light to many, do not be discouraged at the few who are jealous and evilly disposed,” said another.

“Iron ore may think itself senselessly tortured in the furnace, but when the tempered blade of finest steel looks back it knows better,” said a third.

“We are wasting time and energy,” said the Aged Patriarch. “His heart is ill within him and he stands in the shadow of the Other World, we must not overtax his strength or his health for he has his task clear before him.”

Again there was a silence. This time it was a healing silence, while the Telepathic Lamas poured life-giving energy into me, energy which I so often lacked since my second attack of coronary thrombosis. The picture before me, a picture of which I seemed to be a part, grew even brighter, almost brighter than reality.

Then the Aged Man looked up and spoke. “My Brother,” he said, which was an honor indeed, although I too was an Abbot in my own right. “My Brother, we must bring to the knowledge of many the truth that one ego can depart his body voluntarily and permit another ego to take over and reanimate the vacated body. This is your task, to impart this knowledge.”

This was a jolt indeed. My task? I had never wanted to give any publicity about such matters, preferring to remain silent even when it would have been to my material advantage to give information.

I believed that in the esoterically blind West most people would be better for not knowing of the occult worlds. So many “occult” people that I had met had very little knowledge indeed, and a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

My introspection was interrupted by the Abbot. “As you well know, we are upon the threshold of a New Age, an Age wherein it is intended that Man shall be purified of his dross and shall live at peace with others and with himself. The populations shall be stable, neither rising nor falling and this without warlike intent, for a country with a rising population must resort to warfare in order to obtain more living space. We would have people know how a body may be discarded like an old robe for which the wearer has no further use, and passed on to another who needs such a body for some special purpose.”

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I started involuntarily. Yes, I knew all about this, but I had not expected to have to write about it. The whole idea frightened me.

The old Abbot smiled briefly as he said: "I see that this idea, this task, finds no favor with you, my Brother. Yet there are recorded many, many instances of 'possession'. That so many such cases are regarded as evil, or black magic is unfortunate and merely reflects the attitude of those who know little about the subject. Your task will be to write so that those who have eyes may read, and those who are ready may know."

"Suicides," I thought. "People will be rushing to commit suicide, either to escape from debt and troubles or to do a favor to others in providing a body."

"No, no, my Brother," said the old Abbot, "You are in error. No one can escape his debt through suicide, and no one can leave his body for another yet, unless there be very special circumstances which warrant it. We must await the full advent of the New Age, and none may rightfully abandon his body until his allotted span has elapsed. As yet, only when Higher Forces permit, may it be done."

I looked at the men before me, watching the play of golden light around their heads, the electric blue of wisdom in their auras, and the interplay of light from their Silver Cords. A picture, in living color, of men of wisdom and of purity. Austere men, ascetic, shut away from the world. Self possessed and self reliant.

"All right for them," I mumbled to myself. "They don't have to live through the rough-and-tumble of Western life."

Across the muddy Detroit River the roar of traffic came in waves. An early Great Lakes steamer came past my window, the river ice crunching and crackling ahead of it. Western Life? Noise. Clatter. Blaring radios shrieking the alleged merits of one car dealer after another. In the New Home there was peace, peace in which to work, peace in which to think without one having to wonder who—as here— was going to be the next to stab one in the back for a few dollars.

"My Brother," said the Old Man, "We live through the 'rough-and-tumble' of an invaded land wherein to oppose the oppressor is death after slow torture. Our food has to be carried on foot through more than a hundred miles of treacherous mountain paths where a false step or a loose stone could send one tumbling thousands of feet to death. We live on a bowl of tsampa which suffices us for a day. For drink we have the waters of the mountain stream. Tea is a needless luxury which we have learned to do without, for to have pleasures which necessitate risks for others is evil indeed. Look more intently into your

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crystal, my Brother, and we will endeavor to show you the Lhasa of today.”

I arose from my seat by the window, and made sure that the three doors to my room were safely shut. There was no way of silencing the incessant roar of traffic, traffic on this, the riverside of Canada, and the more muted hum of pulsing, bustling Detroit. Between me and the river was the main road, closest to me, and the six tracks of the railroad. Noise? There was no end to it! With one last glance at the scurrying modern scene before me, I closed the Venetian blinds and resumed my seat with my back to the window.

The crystal before me was pulsating with blue light, light that changed and swirled as I turned towards it. As I picked it up and touched it briefly to my head to again establish “rapport” it felt warm to my fingers, a sure sign that much energy was being directed to it from an external source.

The face of the Aged Abbot looked benignly upon me and a fleeting smile crossed his face, then, it were as if an explosion occurred. The picture became disoriented, a patchwork of a myriad non-related colors and swirling banners. Suddenly it was as if someone had thrown open a door, a door in the sky, and as if I were standing at that open door. All sensation of “looking in a crystal” vanished. I was there!

Beneath me, glowing softly in the evening sunlight, was my home, my Lhasa. Nestling under the protection of the mighty mountain ranges, with the Happy River running swiftly through the green Valley. I felt again the bitter pangs of homesickness. All the hatreds and hardships of Western Life welled up within me and it seemed that my heart would break. The joys and sorrows and the rigorous training that I had undergone there, the sight of my native land made all my feelings revolt at the cruel lack of understanding of the Westerners.

But I was not there for my own pleasure! Slowly I seemed to be lowered through the sky, lowering as though I were in a gently descending balloon. A few thousand feet above the surface and I exclaimed in horrified amazement. Airfield? There were airfields around the City of Lhasa! Much appeared unfamiliar, and as I looked about me I saw that there were two new roads coming over the mountain ranges, and diminishing in the direction of India.

Traffic, wheeled traffic, moved swiftly along. I dropped lower, under the control of those who had brought me here. Lower, and I saw excavations where slaves were digging foundations under the control of armed Chinese. Horror of Horrors! At the very foot of the glorious Potala sprawled an ugly hut-city served by a network of dirt roads. Straggling wires linked the buildings and gave a slovenly, unkempt air to the place. I gazed up at the Potala, and—by the

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Sacred Tooth of Buddha!—the Palace was desecrated by Chinese Communist slogans! With a sob of sick dismay I turned to look elsewhere.

A truck swirled along the road, ran right through me, for I was in the astral body, ghostly and insubstantial, and shuddered to a stop a few yards away. Yelling, sloppily dressed Chinese soldiers poured out of the big truck, dragging five monks with them. Loudspeakers on the corners of all the streets began to blare, and at the brazen-voiced commands, the square in which I was standing quickly filled with people. Quickly, because Chinese overseers with whips and bayonets slashed and prodded those who tarried. The crowd, Tibetans and unwilling Chinese colonists, looked dejected and emaciated. They shuffled nervously, and small clouds of dust rose and were borne away on the evening wind.

The five monks, thin and bloodstained, were thrown roughly to their knees. One, with his left eyeball right out of its socket, and dangling on his cheek, was well known to me, he had been an acolyte when I was a lama. The sullen crowd grew silent and still as a Russian-made “jeep” came racing along the road from a building labeled “Department of Tibetan Administration”. All was silent and tense as the car circled the crowd and came to a stop about twenty feet behind the truck.

Guards sprang to attention, and an autocratic Chinese stepped arrogantly from the car. A soldier hurried up to him unreeling wire as he walked. Facing the autocratic Chinese, the soldier saluted and held up a microphone. The Governor, or Administrator, or whatever he styled himself, looked disdainfully round before speaking into the instrument. “You have been brought here,” he said, “to witness the execution of these five reactionary and subversive monks. No one shall stand in the way of the glorious Chinese people under the able chairmanship of Comrade Mao.” He turned away, and the loudspeakers on the top of the truck clicked into silence. The Governor motioned to a soldier with a long, curved sword. He moved to the first prisoner kneeling bound before him. For a moment he stood with his legs apart, testing the edge of his sword with the ball of his thumb. Satisfied, he took his stance, and gently touched the neck of the bound man. Raising the sword high above his head, with the evening sunlight glinting on the bright blade, he brought it down. There was a soggy noise, followed instantly by a sharp ‘crack’ and the man’s head sprang from his shoulders, followed by a bright gout of blood which pulsed, and pulsed again, before dying away to a thin trickle. As the twitching, headless body lay upon the dusty ground, the Governor spat upon it and exclaimed: “So shall die all enemies of the commune!”

The monk with his eyeball dangling upon his cheek raised his head

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proudly and cried in a loud voice: "Long live Tibet. By the Glory of Buddha it shall rise again."

A soldier was about to run him through with his bayonet when the Governor hastily stopped him. With his face contorted with rage, he screamed: "You insult the glorious Chinese people? For that you shall die slowly!" He turned to the soldiers, shouting orders. Men scurried everywhere.

Two raced off to a nearby building, and returned, running, with ropes. Other men slashed at the bonds of the tied monk, cutting his arms and legs in the process. The Governor stamped up and down, yelling for more Tibetans to be brought to witness the scene. The loudspeakers blared and blared again, and truckloads of soldiers came bringing men and women and children to "see the justice of the Chinese Comrades". A soldier struck the monk in the face with his gun-butt, bursting the dangling eye and smashing his nose. The Governor, standing idly by, glanced at the other three monks still kneeling bound in the dirt of the road. "Shoot them," he said, "Shoot them through the back of the head and let their bodies lie." A soldier stepped forward and drew his revolver. Placing it just behind a monk's ear he pulled the trigger. The man fell forward, dead, his brains leaking on the ground. Quite unconcerned, the soldier stepped to the second monk and speedily shot him.

As he was moving to the third, a young soldier said, "Let me, Comrade, for I have not killed yet." Nodding assent, the executioner stepped aside to allow the young soldier, trembling with eagerness, to take his place. Drawing his revolver, he pointed it at the third monk, shut his eyes, and pulled the trigger. The bullet sped through the man's cheeks and hit a Tibetan spectator in the foot. "Try again," said the former executioner, "and keep your eyes open."

By now his hand was trembling so much with fright and shame that he missed completely, as he saw the Governor scornfully watching him. "Put the muzzle of the revolver in his ear, and then shoot," said the Governor. Once again the young soldier stepped to the side of the doomed monk, savagely rammed the muzzle of his gun in his ear and pulled the trigger. The monk fell forward, dead, beside his companions.

The crowd had increased, and as I looked round I saw that the monk whom I knew had been tied by his left arm and left leg to the jeep. His right arm and right leg were tied to the truck. A grinning Chinese soldier entered the jeep and started the engine. Slowly, as slowly as he possibly could, he engaged gear and moved forward. The monk's arm was pulled out straight, rigid as an iron bar, there was a "snick" and it was torn completely from the shoulder. The jeep moved on. With a loud "crack" the hip bone broke, and the man's right leg was torn from his body. The jeep stopped, and the Governor

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entered. Then it drove off, with the bleeding body of the dying monk bouncing and jolting over the stony road. Soldiers climbed aboard the big truck, and that drove off, trailing behind it a bloody arm and leg. As I turned away, sickened, I heard a feminine scream from behind a building, followed by a coarse laugh. A Chinese oath as the woman evidently bit her attacker, and a bubbling shriek as she was stabbed in return.

Above me, the dark blue of the night sky, liberally besprinkled with the pinpoints of colored lights which were other worlds. Many of them, as I knew, were inhabited. How many I wondered, were as savage as this Earth? Around me were bodies. Unburied bodies. Bodies preserved in the frigid air of Tibet until the vultures and any wild animals ate them up. No dogs here now to help in that task, for the Chinese had killed them off for food.

No cats now guarded the temples of Lhasa, for they too had been killed. Death? Tibetan life was of no more value to the invading Communists than plucking a blade of grass. The Potala loomed before me. Now, in the faint star light, the crude slogans of the Chinese blended with the shadows and were not seen. A searchlight, mounted above the Sacred Tombs, glared across the Valley of Lhasa like a malignant eye. The Chakpori, my Medical School, looked gaunt and forlorn. From its summit came snatches of an obscene Chinese song. For some time I remained in deep contemplation. Unexpectedly, a Voice said: "My Brother, you must come away now, for you have been absent long. As you rise, look about you well."

Slowly I rose into the air, like thistledown bobbing in a vagrant breeze. The moon had risen now, flooding the Valley and mountain peaks with pure and silvery light. I looked in horror at ancient lamaseries, bombed and untenanted, with all the debris of Man's earthly possessions strewn about uncared for. The unburied dead lay in grotesque heaps, preserved by the eternal cold. Some clutched prayer wheels, some were stripped of clothing and ripped into tattered shreds of bloody flesh by bomb blast and metal splinters. I saw a Sacred Figure, intact, gazing down as if in compassion at the murderous folly of mankind.

Upon the craggy slopes, where the hermitages clung to the sides of the mountains in loving embrace, I saw hermitage after hermitage which had been despoiled by the invaders. The hermits, immured for years in solitary darkness in search of spiritual advancement, had been blinded on the instant when sunlight had entered their cells. Almost without exception, the hermit was stretched dead beside his ruined home, with his lifelong friend and servant stretched dead beside him. I could look no more. Carnage? Senseless murder of the innocent, defenseless monks? What was the use? I turned away and called

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upon those who guided me to remove me from this graveyard.

My task in life, I had known from the start, was in connection with the human aura, that radiation which entirely surrounds the human body, and by its fluctuating color shows the Adept if a person is honorable or otherwise. The sick person could have his or her illness seen by the colors of the aura. Everyone must have noticed the haze around a street light on a misty night. Some may even have noticed the well-known "corona discharge" from high tension cables at certain times. The human aura is somewhat similar. It shows the life force within. Artists of old painted a halo, or nimbus round the head of saints.

Why? Because they could see the aura of those people. Since the publication of my first two books people have written to me from all over the world, and some of those people can also see the aura.

Years ago a Dr. Kilner, researching at a London Hospital, found that he could, under certain circumstances, see the aura. He wrote a book about it. Medical science was not ready for such a discovery, and all that he had discovered was hushed up. I too, in my way, am doing research, and I visualize an instrument which will enable any medical man or scientist to see the aura of another and cure "incurable" illnesses by ultrasonic vibrations. Money, money, that is the problem. Research always was expensive! And now, I mused, they want me to take on another task! About a change of bodies!

Outside my window there was a shuddering crash which literally shook the house. "Oh," I thought, "The railroad men are shunting again. There will be no more quiet for a long time." On the river a Great Lakes freight steamer hooted mournfully, like a cow mooing for her calf and from the distance came the echoing response of another ship.

"My Brother!" The Voice came to me again, and hastily I gave my attention to the crystal. The old men were still sitting in a circle with the Aged Patriarch in the center. Now they were looking tired, exhausted would perhaps describe their condition more accurately, for they had transmitted much power in order to make this impromptu, unprepared trip possible.

"My Brother, you have seen clearly the condition of our country. You have seen the hard hand of the oppressor. Your task, your two tasks are clear before you and you can succeed at both, to the glory of our Order."

The tired old man was looking anxious. He knew, as I knew, that I could with honor refuse this task. I had been greatly misunderstood through the lying tales spread by an ill-disposed group. Yet I was very highly clairvoyant, very highly telepathic.

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Astral traveling to me was easier than walking. Write? Well, yes, people could read what I wrote and if they could not all believe, then those who were sufficiently evolved would believe and know the truth.

“My Brother,” said the Old Man, softly, “Even though the unevolved, the unenlightened, pretend to believe that you write fiction, enough of the Truth will get to their subconscious and, who knows, the small seed of truth may blossom in this or in their next life. As the Lord Buddha Himself has said in the Parable of the Three Chariots, the end justifies the means.”

The Parable of the Three Chariots! What vivid memories that brought back to me. How clearly I remember my beloved guide and friend, the Lama Mingyar Dondup instructing me at the Chapkori.

An old medical monk had been easing the fears of a very sick woman with some harmless “white lie.” I, young and inexperienced, had, with smug complacency, been expressing shocked surprise that a monk should tell an untruth even in such an emergency. My Guide had come along to me, saying, “Let us go to my room, Lobsang. We can with profit turn to the Scriptures.” He smiled at me with his warm, benevolent aura of contentment as he turned and walked beside me to his room far up, overlooking the Potala.

“Tea and Indian cakes, yes, we must have refreshment, Lobsang, for with refreshment you can also digest information.” The monk-servant, who had seen us enter, appeared unbidden with the delicacies which I liked and which I could only obtain through the good offices of my Guide.

For a time we sat and talked idly, or rather I talked as I ate. Then, as I finished, the illustrious Lama said: “There are exceptions to every rule, Lobsang, and every coin or token has two sides. The Buddha talked at length to His friends and disciples, and much that He said was written down and preserved. There is a tale very applicable to the present. I will tell it to you.” He resettled himself, cleared his throat, and continued:

“This is the tale of the Three Chariots. Called so because chariots were greatly in demand among the boys of those days, just as stilts and Indian sweet cakes are now. The Buddha was talking to one of His followers named Sariputra. They were sitting in the shade of one of the large Indian trees discussing truth and untruth, and how the merits of the former are sometimes outweighed by the kindness of the latter.

“The Buddha said, ‘Now, Sariputra, let us take the case of a very rich man, a man so rich that he could afford to gratify every whim of his family. He is an old man with a large house and with many sons. Since the birth of those sons he has done everything to protect them from danger. They know not danger

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and they have not experienced pain. The man left his estate and his house and went to a neighboring village on a matter of business. As he returned he saw smoke rolling up into the sky. He hurried faster and as he approached his home he found that it was on fire. All the four walls were on fire, and the roof was burning. Inside the house his sons were still playing, for they did not understand the danger. They could have got out but they did not know the meaning of pain because they had been so shielded; they did not understand the danger of fire because the only fire they had seen had been in the kitchens.

“The man was greatly worried for how could he alone get into the house and save his sons? Had he entered, he could perhaps have carried out one only, the others would have played and thought it all a game. Some of them were very young, they might have rambled and walked into the flames they had not learned to fear. The father went to the door and called to them, saying, ‘Boys, boys, come out. Come here immediately.’”

“But the boys did not want to obey their father, they wanted to play, they wanted to huddle in the center of the house away from the increasing heat which they did not understand. The father thought: ‘I know my sons well, I know them exactly, the differences in their characters, their every shade of temperament; I know they will only come out if they think there is some gain, some new toy here.’ And so he went back to the door and called loudly: ‘Boys, boys, come out, come out immediately. I have toys for you here beside the door. Bullock chariots, goat chariots, and a chariot as fleet as the wind because it is drawn by a deer. Come quickly or you shall not have them.’”

“The boys, not fearing the fire, not fearing the dangers of the flaming roof and walls, but fearing only to lose the toys, came rushing out. They came rushing, scrambling, pushing each other in their eagerness to be first to reach the toys and have first choice. And as the last one left the building, the flaming roof fell in amid a shower of sparks and debris.

“The boys heeded not the dangers just surmounted, but set up a great clamor. ‘Father, father, where are the toys which you promised us? Where are the three chariots! We hurried and they are not here. You promised, father.’”

“The father, a rich man to whom the loss of his house was no great blow, now that his sons were safe, hurried them off and bought them their toys, the chariots, knowing that his artifice had saved the lives of his sons.’”

“The Buddha turned to Sariputra and said, ‘Now Sariputra, was not that artifice justified? Did not that man by using innocent means, justify the end? Without his knowledge his sons would have been consumed in the flames:

“Sariputra turned to the Buddha and said, ‘Yes, Oh Master, the end well

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justified the means and brought much good.”

The Lama Mingyar Dondup smiled at me as he said, “You were left for three days outside the Chakpori, you thought you were barred from entry, yet we were using a test on you, a means which was justified in the end, for you progress well.”

I too am using “a means which will be justified in the end.” I am writing this, my true story—The Third Eye and Doctor from Lhasa are absolutely true also—in order that I may later continue with my aura work. So many people have written to ask why I write that I give them the explanation; I write the truth in order that Western people may know that the Soul of man is greater than these sputniks, or fizzling rockets. Eventually Man will go to other planets by astral travel as I have done! But Western Man will not so go while all he thinks of is self gain, self advancement and never mind the rights of the other fellow. I write the truth in order that I may later advance the cause of the human aura. Think of this (it will come), a patient walks into a doctor’s consulting room. The doctor does not bother to make any enquiries, he just takes out a special camera and photographs the aura of the patient.

Within a minute or so, this non-clairvoyant medical practitioner has in his hand a color photograph of his patient’s aura. He studies it, its striations and shades of color, just as a psychiatrist studies the recorded brain waves of a mentally sick person.

The general practitioner, having compared the color photograph with standard charts, writes down a course of ultrasonic and color spectrum treatments which will repair the deficiencies of the patient’s aura. Cancer? It will be cured. T.B.? That too will be cured. Ridiculous? Well, just a short time ago it was “ridiculous” to think of sending radio waves across the Atlantic. “Ridiculous” to think of flying at more than a hundred miles an hour. The human body would not stand the strain, they said. “Ridiculous” to think of going into space. Monkeys have already. This “ridiculous” idea of mine. I have seen it working!

The noises from without penetrated my room, bringing me back to the present. Noises? Shunting trains, a screaming fire engine whizzed by, and loud talking people hasten in to the bright lights of a local place of entertainment. “Later,” I tell myself, “when this terrible clamor stops, I will use the crystal and will tell Them that I will do as they ask.”

A growing “warm-feeling” inside tells me that “They” already know, and are glad. So, here as it is directed, the truth, The Rampa Story.

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CHAPTER TWO

TIBET, at the turn of the century, was beset by many problems. Britain was making a great uproar, shouting to all the world that Tibet was too friendly with Russia, to the detriment of British Imperialism. The Czar of all the Russia's was shrieking in the vast halls of his palace in Moscow, complaining vociferously that Tibet was becoming too friendly with Britain. The Royal Court of China resounded with fevered accusations that Tibet was being too friendly with Britain and with Russia and was most certainly not friendly enough with China.

Lhasa swarmed with spies of various nations, poorly disguised as mendicant monks or pilgrims, or missionaries, or anything which seemed to offer a plausible excuse for being in Tibet at all. Sundry gentlemen of assorted races met deviously under the dubious cover of darkness to see how they could profit by the troubled international situation. The Great Thirteenth, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama Incarnation and a great statesman in His own right, kept his temper and the peace and steered Tibet clear of embroilment. Polite messages of undying friendship, and insincere offers of "protection" cross the Sacred Himalayas from the heads of the leading nations of the world.

Into such an atmosphere of trouble and unrest I was born. As Grandmother Rampa so truly said, I was born to trouble and have been in trouble ever since, and hardly any of it of my own making! The Seers and Soothsayers were loud in their praise of "the boy's" inborn gifts of clairvoyance and telepathy. "An exalted ego," said one.

"Destined to leave his name in history," said another. "A Great Light to our Cause," said a third. And I, at that early age, raised up my voice in hearty protest at being so foolish as to be born once again. Relatives, as soon as I was able to understand their speech, took every opportunity to remind me of the noise I made; they told me with glee that mine was the most raucous, the most

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unmusical voice that it had been their misfortune to hear.

Father was one of the leading men of Tibet. A nobleman of high degree, he had considerable influence in the affairs of our country. Mother, too, through her side of the family exercised much authority in matters of policy. Now, looking back over the years, I am inclined to think that they were almost as important as Mother thought, and that was of no mean order.

My early days were spent at our home near the Potala, just across the Kaling Chu, or Happy River. "Happy" because it gave life to Lhasa as it ran chuckling over many brooks, and meandered in rivulet form through the city.

Our home was well wooded, well staffed with servants, and my parents lived in princely splendor. I—well I was subjected to much discipline, much hardship. Father had become greatly soured during the Chinese invasion in the first decade of the century, and he appeared to have taken an irrational dislike to me. Mother, like so many society women throughout the world, had no time for children, looking upon them as things to be got rid of as speedily as possible, and then parked on some hired attendant.

Brother Paljor did not stay with us long; before his seventh birthday he left for "The Heavenly Fields" and Peace. I was four years of age then, and Father's dislike for me seemed to increase from that time. Sister Yasodhara was six at the time of the passing of our brother, and we both bemoaned, not the loss of our brother, but the increased discipline which started at his passing.

Now my family are all dead, killed by the Chinese Communists. My sister was killed for resisting the advances of the invaders. My parents for being landowners. The home from whence I gazed wide-eyed over the beautiful parkland has been made into dormitories for slave workers. In one wing of the house are women workers, and in the right wing are men. All are married, and if husband and wife behave and do their quota of work, they can see each other once a week for half an hour, after which they are medically examined.

But in the far-off days of my childhood these things were in the future, something which was known would happen but which, like death at the end of one's life, did not obtrude too much. The Astrologers had indeed foretold these happenings, but we went about our daily life blissfully oblivious of the future. Just before I was seven years of age, at the age when my brother left this life, there was a huge ceremonial party at which the State Astrologers consulted their charts and determined what my future was going to be. Everyone who was "anything" was there. Many came uninvited by bribing servants to let them in. The crush was so thick that there was hardly room to move in our ample

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grounds. The priest fumbled and bumbled, as priests will, and put on an impressive show before announcing the outstanding points of my career. In fairness I must state that they were absolutely right in everything unfortunate which they said. Then they told my parents that I must enter the Chakpori Lamasery to be trained as a Medical Monk.

My gloom was quite intense, because I had a feeling that it would lead to trouble. No one listened to me, though, and I was shortly undergoing the ordeal of sitting outside the Lamasery gate for three days and nights just to see if I had the endurance necessary to become a medical monk.

That I passed the test was more a tribute to my fear of Father than of my physical stamina. Entry to the Chakpori was the easiest stage. Our days were long, it was hard indeed to have a day which started at midnight, and which required us to attend services at intervals throughout the night as well as throughout the day. We were taught the ordinary academic stuff, our religious duties, matters of the metaphysical world, and medical lore, for we were to become medical monks. Our Eastern cures were such that Western medical thought still cannot understand them. Yet, Western pharmaceutical firms are trying hard to synthesize the potent ingredients which are in the herbs we used. Then, the age-old Eastern remedy, now artificially produced, will be hailed as an example of Western achievement. Such is progress.

When I was eight years of age I had an operation which opened my “Third Eye”, that special organ of clairvoyance which is moribund in most people because they deny its existence. With this “eye” seeing, I was able to distinguish the human aura and so divine the intention of those around me. It was—and is!—most entertaining to listen to the empty words of those who pretended friendship for self gain, yet truly had black murder in their hearts. The aura can tell the whole medical history of a person. By determining what is missing from the aura, and replacing the deficiencies by special radiations, people can be cured of illness.

Because I had stronger than usual powers of clairvoyance I was very frequently called upon by the Inmost One, the Great Thirteenth Incarnation of the Dalai Lama, to look at the aura of those who visited Him “in friendship”. My beloved Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, a very capable clairvoyant, trained me well. He also taught me the greatest secrets of astral traveling, which now to me is easier than walking. Almost anyone, no matter what they call their religion, believes in the existence of a “soul” or “other body”. Actually there are several “bodies” or “sheaths”, but the exact number does not concern us here. We believe—rather, we know!—that it is possible to lay aside the ordinary physical body (the one that supports the clothes!) and travel anywhere,

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even beyond the Earth, in the astral form.

Everyone does astral traveling, even the ones who think it is “all nonsense!” It is as natural as breathing. Most people do it when they are asleep and so, unless they are trained, they know nothing about it. How many people, in the morning, exclaim: “Oh! I had such a wonderful dream last night, I seemed to be with So-and-So. We were very happy together and she said she was writing. Of course it is all very vague now!” And then, usually in a very few days a letter does arrive. The explanation is that one of the persons traveled astrally to the other, and because they were not trained, it became a “dream”. Almost anyone can astral travel. How many authenticated cases there are of dying persons visiting a loved one in a dream in order to say good-bye. Again, it is astral traveling. The dying person, with the bonds of the world loosened, easily visits a friend in passing.

The trained person can lie down and relax and then ease off the ties that chain the ego, or companion body, or soul, call it what you will, it is the same thing. Then, when the only connection between is the “Silver Cord”, the second body can drift off, like a captive balloon at the end of its line. Wherever you can think of, there you can go, fully conscious, fully alert, when you are trained. The dream state is when a person astral travels without knowing it, and brings back a confused, jumbled impression. Unless one is trained, there are a multitude of impressions constantly being received by the “Silver Cord” which confuses the “dreamer” more and more. In the astral you can go anywhere, even beyond the confines of the Earth, for the astral body does not breathe, nor does it eat. All its wants are supplied by the “Silver Cord” which, during life, constantly connects it to the physical body.

The “Silver Cord” is mentioned in the Christian Bible: “Lest the ‘Silver Cord’ be severed, and the ‘Golden Bowl’ be shattered.” The “Golden Bowl” is the halo or nimbus around the head of a spiritually evolved person. Those not spiritually evolved have a halo of a very different color!

Artists of old painted a golden halo around the pictures of saints because the artists actually saw the halo, otherwise he would not have painted it. The halo is merely a very small part of the human aura, but is more easily seen because it is usually much brighter.

If scientists would investigate astral travel and auras, instead of meddling with fizzling rockets which so often fail to go into orbit, they would have the complete key to space travel. By astral projection they could visit another world and so determine the type of ship needed to make the journey in the physical, for astral travel has one great drawback; one cannot take any material object nor can one return with any material object. One can only bring

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back knowledge. So, the scientists will need a ship in order to bring back live specimens and photographs with which to convince an incredulous world, for people cannot believe a thing exists unless they can tear it to pieces in order to prove that it might be possible after all.

I am particularly reminded of a journey into space which I took. This is absolutely true, and those who are evolved will know it as such. It does not matter about the others, they will learn when they reach a greater stage of spiritual maturity.

This is an experience which happened some years ago when I was in Tibet studying at the Chakpori Lamasery. Although it happened many years ago, the memory of it is as fresh in my mind as if it happened but yesterday.

My Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, and a fellow lama, actually a close friend of mine named Jigme, and I, were upon the roof of the Chakpori, on Iron Mountain, in Lhasa, Tibet. It was a cold night indeed, some forty degrees below zero. As we stood upon the exposed roof the shrieking wind pressed our robes tightly against our shivering bodies. At the side of us away from the wind our robes streamed out like Prayer Flags, leaving us chilled to the marrow, threatening to pull us over the precipitous mountainside.

As we looked about us, leaning heavily against the wind to maintain our balance, we saw the dim lights of Lhasa city in the distance, while off to our right the lights of the Potala added to the mystical air of the scene. All the windows seemed to be adorned with gleaming butter lamps, which even though protected by the mighty walls, wavered and danced at the bidding of the wind. In the faint starlight the golden roofs of the Potala were reflecting and glinting as if the Moon itself had descended and played among the pinnacles and tombs atop the glorious building.

But we shivered in the bitter cold, shivered, and wished that we were warm in the incense-laden air of the temple beneath us. We were on the roof for a special purpose, as the Lama Mingyar Dondup enigmatically put it. Now he stood between us, seemingly as firm as the mountain itself, as he pointed upwards at a far distant star—a red looking world—and said, “My brothers this is the star Zhoro, an old, old planet, one of the oldest in this particular system. Now it is approaching the end of its long lifetime.”

He turned to us with his back to the biting wind, and said, “You have studied much in astral traveling. Now, together, we will travel in the astral to that planet. We will leave our bodies here upon this windswept roof, and we will move up beyond the atmosphere, beyond even Time.”

So saying he led the way across the roof to where there was some slight

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shelter afforded by a projecting cupola of the roof. He lay down and bade us to lie beside him. We wrapped our robes tightly around us and each held the hand of the other. Above us was the deep purple vault of the Heavens, speckled with faint pin-pricks of light, colored light, because all planets have different lights when seen in the clear night air of Tibet. Around us was the shrieking wind, but our training had always been severe, and we thought naught of remaining on that roof. We knew that this was not to be an ordinary journey into the astral, for we did not often leave our bodies thus exposed to inclement weather. When a body is uncomfortable the ego can travel further and faster and remember in greater detail. Only for small transworld journeys does one relax and make the body comfortable.

My Guide said, "Now let us clasp our hands together, and let us project ourselves together beyond this Earth. Keep with me and we will journey far and have unusual experiences this night."

We lay back and breathed in the accepted pattern for astral traveling release. I was conscious of the wind screaming through the cords of the Prayer Flags which fluttered madly above us. Then, all of a sudden, there was a jerk, and I felt no more the biting fingers of the chill wind. I found myself floating as if in a different time, above my body, and all was peaceful. The Lama Mingyar Dondup was already standing erect in his astral form, and then, as I looked down, I saw my friend Jigme also leaving his body. He and I stood and made a link to join us to our guide the Lama Mingyar Dondup. This link, called ectoplasm, is manufactured from the astral body by thought.

It is the material from which mediums produce spirit manifestations. The bond completed, we soared upwards, up into the night sky; I, ever inquisitive, looked down. Beneath us, streaming beneath us, were our Silver Cords, those endless cords which join the physical and the astral bodies during life. We flew on and on, upwards. The Earth receded.

We could see the corona of the sun peering across the far ridge of the Earth in what must have been the Western world, the Western world into which we had so extensively traveled in the astral. Higher we went and then we could see the outlines of the oceans and continents in the sunlit part of the world. From our height the world now looked like a crescent moon, but with the Aurora Borealis, or Northern Lights, flashing across the poles.

We moved on and on, faster and faster, until we outstripped the speed of light for we were disembodied spirits, soaring ever onwards, approaching almost the speed of thought. As I looked ahead of me I saw a planet, huge and menacing and red, straight in front of me. We were falling towards it at a speed impossible to calculate. Although I had had much experience of astral travel-

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ing I felt pangs of alarm. The astral form of the Lama Mingyar Dondup chuckled telepathically and said, "Oh Lobsang, if we were to hit that planet it would not hurt them or us. We should go straight through it, there would be no bar."

At last we found ourselves floating above a red, desolate world; red rocks, red sand in a tideless red sea. As we sank down towards the surface of this world we saw strange creatures like huge crabs moving lethargically along the water's edge. We stood upon that red rock shore and looked upon the water, tideless, deadly, with red scum upon it, stinking scum. As we watched, the turbid surface rippled unwillingly, and rippled again, and a strange unearthly creature emerged, a creature also red, heavily armored, and with remarkable joints. It groaned as if tired and dispirited, and reaching the red sand, it flopped down by the side of the tideless sea. Above our heads a red sun glowed dully, casting fearful, blood-red shadows, harsh and garish. About us there was no movement, no sign of life other than the strange shelled creatures which lay half-dead on the ground. Even though I was in the astral body I shivered in apprehension as I gazed about me. A red sea upon which floated red scum, red rocks, red dying embers of a fire, a fire which was about to flicker into nothingness.

The Lama Mingyar Dondup said, "This is a dying world. There is no longer rotation here. This world floats derelict in the sea of Space, a satellite to a dying sun, which is soon to collapse, and thus to become a dwarf star without life, without light, a dwarf star which eventually will collide with another star, and from those another world shall be born. I have brought you here because yet in this world there is life of a high order, a life which is here for research and investigation of phenomena of this sort. Look about you."

He turned and pointed with his right hand to the far distance, and we saw three immense towers reaching up into the red, red sky, and on the very top of those towers three gleaming crystal balls glowed and pulsated with clear, yellow light, as if they were alive.

As we stood there wondering one of the lights changed, one of the spheres turned a vivid electric blue. The Lama Mingyar Dondup said, "Come, they are bidding us welcome. Let us descend into the ground to where they are living in an underground chamber."

Together we moved toward the base of that tower, and then, as we stood beneath the framework we saw there was an entrance heavily secured with some strange metal which glimmered and stood out like a scar upon that red and barren land. We moved through it, for metal, or rocks, or anything is no bar to those in the astral. We moved through and traversed long red corridors of dead rock until at last we stood in a very large hall, a hall surrounded by

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charts and maps, and strange machines and instruments. In the center there was a long table at which sat nine very aged men, all unlike each other. One was tall and thin, and with a pointed head, a conical head. Yet another was short and very solid looking. Each of these men was different. It was clear to us that each man was of a different planet, of a different race. Human? Well perhaps humanoid would be a better word with which to describe them. They were all human, but some were more human than others.

We became aware that all nine were looking fixedly in our direction. "Ah," said one telepathically, "we have visitors from afar. We saw you land upon this, our research station, and we bid you welcome."

"Respected Fathers," said the Lama Mingyar Dondup, "I have brought to you two who have just entered upon the state of Lamahood and who are earnest students in search of knowledge."

"They are indeed welcome," said the tall man, who was apparently the leader of the group. "We will do anything to help as we have helped you with others previously." This was indeed news to me because I had no idea that my Guide did such extensive astral traveling through celestial places.

The shorter man was looking at me, and smiled. He said in the universal language of telepathy, "I see, young man, that you are greatly intrigued by the difference in our appearances."

"Respected Father," I replied, somewhat overawed by the ease with which he had divined my thoughts, thoughts which I had tried hard to conceal. "That is indeed a fact. I marvel at the disparity of sizes and shapes between you, and it occurred to me that you could not all be men of Earth."

"You have perceived correctly," said the short man.

"We are all human, but due to environment we have altered our shapes and our stature somewhat, but can you not see the same thing on your own planet, where upon the land of Tibet there are some monks whom you employ as guards who are seven feet tall. Yet upon another country of that world, you have people who are but half that stature, and you call them pygmies. They are both human; they are both able to reproduce each with the other, notwithstanding any difference in size, for we are all humans of carbon molecules. Here in this particular Universe everything depends upon the basic molecules of carbon and hydrogen for these two are the bricks composing the structure of your Universe. We who have traveled in other Universes far beyond this particular branch of our nebulae know that other Universes use different bricks. Some use silicon, some use gypsum, some use other things, but they are different from people of this Universe, and we find to our sorrow that our thoughts are

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not always in affinity with them.”

The Lama Mingyar Dondup said, “I have brought these two young lamas here so that they can see the stages of death and decay in a planet which has exhausted its atmosphere, and in which the oxygen of that atmosphere has combined with metals to burn them and to reduce everything to an impalpable dust.”

“That is so,” said the tall man. “We would like to point out to these young men that every thing that is born must die. Everything lives for its allotted span, and that allotted span is a number of units of life. A unit of life in any living creature is a heartbeat of that creature. The life of a planet is 2,700,000,000 heartbeats, after which the planet dies, but from the death of a planet others are born. A human, too, lives for 2,700,000,000 heartbeats, and so does the lowliest insect. An insect which lives for but twenty-four hours has, during that time, had 2,700,000,000 heartbeats. A planet—they vary, of course—but one planet may have one heartbeat in 27,000 years, and after that there will be a convulsion upon that world as it shakes itself ready for the next heartbeat.

“All life, then,” he went on, “has the same span, but some creatures live at rates different from those of others. Creatures upon Earth, the elephant, the tortoise, the ant and the dog, they all live for the same number of heartbeats, but all have hearts beating at different speeds, and thus they may appear to live longer or to live less.”

Jigme and I found this extremely enthralling, and it explained so much to us that we had perceived upon our native land of Tibet. We had heard in the Potala about the tortoise which lives for so many years, and about the insect which lived for but a summer’s evening. Now we could see that their perceptions must have been speeded up to keep pace with their speeding hearts.

The short man who seemed to look upon us with considerable approval, said, “Yes, not only that, but many animals represent different functions of the body. The cow, for instance, as anyone can see, is merely a walking mammary gland, the giraffe is a neck, a dog-well, anyone knows what a dog is always thinking of—sniffing the wind for news as his sight is so poor—and so a dog can be regarded as a nose. Other animals have similar affinities to different parts of one’s anatomy. The anteater of South America could be looked upon as a tongue.”

For some time we talked telepathically, learning many strange things, learning with the speed of thought as one does in the astral. Then at last the Lama Mingyar Dondup stood up and said it was time to leave.

Beneath us, as we returned, the golden roofs of the Potala gleamed in

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the frosty sunlight. Our bodies were stiff, heavy and difficult to work with their half frozen joints. "And so," we thought, as we stumbled to our feet, "another experience, another journey has ended. What next?"

A science at which we Tibetans excelled was healing by herbs. Always, until now, Tibet has been shut off from foreigners, and our fauna and flora have never been explored by the foreigners. On the high plateaus grow strange plants. Curare, and the "recently discovered" mescaline, for instance, were known in Tibet centuries ago. We could cure many of the afflictions of the Western world, but first the people of the Western world would have to have a little more faith. But most of the Westerners are mad anyway, so why bother?

Every year parties of us, those who had done best at their studies, went on herb-gathering expeditions. Plants and pollens, roots and seeds, were carefully gathered, treated, and stored in yak-hide sacks. I loved the work and studied well. Now I find that the herbs I knew so well cannot be obtained here.

Eventually I was considered fit to take the Ceremony of the Little Death, which I wrote about in *The Third Eye*. By special rituals I was placed in a state of cataleptic death, far beneath the Potala, and I journeyed into the past, along the Akashic Record. I journeyed, too, to the lands of the Earth. But let me write it as it felt to me then.

The corridor in the living rock hundreds of feet beneath the frozen earth was dank, dank and dark with the darkness of the tomb itself. I moved along its length drifting like smoke in the blackness, and with increasing familiarity with that blackness I perceived at first indistinctly the greenish phosphorescence of moldering vegetation clinging to the rock walls. Occasionally where the vegetation was most prolific and the light the brightest I could catch a yellow gleam from the gold vein running the length of this rocky tunnel.

I drifted along soundlessly without consciousness of time, without thought of anything except that I must go farther and farther into the interior of the earth, for this was a day which was momentous to me, a day when I was returning from three days in the astral state. Time passed and I found myself deeper, deeper in the subterranean chamber in increasing blackness, a blackness which seemed to sound, a blackness which seemed to vibrate.

In my imagination I could picture the world above me, the world to which I was now returning. I could visualize the familiar scene now hidden by total darkness. I waited, poised in the air like a cloud of incense smoke in a temple.

Gradually, so gradually, so slowly that it was some time before I could even perceive it, a sound came down the corridor, the vaguest of sounds, but gradually swelling and increasing in intensity. The sound of chanting, the sound

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of silver bells, and the muffled “shush-shush” of leather-bound feet. At last, at long last, an eerie wavering light appeared glistening along the walls of the tunnel. The sound was becoming louder now. I waited poised above a rock slab in the darkness. I waited.

Gradually, oh so gradually, so painfully slowly, moving figures crept cautiously down the tunnel towards me. As they came closer I saw that they were yellow-robed monks bearing aloft glaring torches, precious torches from the temple above with rare resin woods and incense sticks bound together giving a fragrant scent to drive away the odors of death and of decay, bright lights to dim and make invisible the evil glow of the rank vegetation.

Slowly the priests entered the underground chamber. Two moved to each of the walls near the entrance and fumbled on the rocky ledges. Then one after the other flickering butter lamps sprang into life. Now the chamber was more illuminated and I could look about me once again and see as I had not seen for three days.

The priests stood around me and saw me not, they stood around a stone tomb resting in the center of the chamber. The chanting increased, and the ringing of the silver bells too. At last, at a signal given by an old man, six monks stopped and panting and grunting lifted the stone lid off the coffin. Inside as I looked down I saw my own body, a body clad in the robes of a priest of the lama class. The monks were chanting louder now, singing:

“Oh Spirit of the Visiting Lama, wandering the face of the world above, return for this, the third day, has come and is about to pass. A first stick of incense is lit to recall the Spirit of the Visiting Lama.”

A monk stood forth and lit a stick of sweet smelling incense, red in color, and then took another from a box as the priests chanted:

“Oh Spirit of the Visiting Lama, returning here to us, hasten for the hour of your awakening draws nigh. A second stick of incense is lit to hasten your return.” As the monk solemnly drew a stick of incense from the box, the priest recited :

“Oh Spirit of the Visiting Lama, we await to reanimate and nourish your earthly body. Speed you on your way for the hour is at hand, and with your return here another grade in your education will have been passed. A third stick of incense is lit at the call of returning.”

As the smoke swirled lazily upwards engulfing my astral form, I shivered in dread. It was as if invisible hands were drawing me, as if hands were drawing on my Silver Cord, drawing me down, reeling me in, forcing me into

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that cold, lifeless body. I felt the coldness of death, I felt shivering in my limbs, I felt my astral sight grow dim, and then great gasps wracked my body which trembled uncontrollably.

High Priests bent down into the stone tomb, lifted my head and my shoulders and forced something bitter between my tightly clenched jaws.

“Ah,” I thought, “back in the confining body again, back in the confining body.” It seemed as if fire was coursing through my veins, veins which had been dormant for three days. Gradually the priests eased me out of the tomb, supporting me, lifting me, keeping me on my feet, walking me around in the stone chamber, kneeling before me, prostrating themselves at my feet, reciting their mantras, saying their prayers, and lighting their sticks of incense. They forced nourishment into me, washed me and dried me, and changed my robes.

With consciousness returning into the body, for some strange reason my thoughts wandered back to the time three days before when a similar occurrence had taken place. Then I had been laid down in this self same stone coffin. One by one the lamas had looked at me. Then they had put the lid upon the stone coffin and extinguished the sticks of incense. Solemnly they had departed up the stone corridor, bearing their lights with them, while I lay quite a little frightened in that stone tomb, frightened in spite of all my training, frightened in spite of knowing what was to happen. I had been long in the darkness, in the silence of death. Silence? No, for my perceptions had been trained, and were so acute that I could hear their breathing, sounds of life diminishing as they went away. I could hear the shuffling of their feet growing fainter and fainter, and then darkness, silence, and stillness, and nothingness.

Death itself could not be worse than this, I thought. Time crawled endlessly by as I lay there becoming colder and colder. All of a sudden the world exploded as in a golden flame, and I left the confines of the body, I left the blackness of the stone tomb, and the underground chamber.

I forced my way through the earth, the icebound earth, and into the cold pure air, and away far above the towering Himalayas, far out over the land and oceans, far away to the ends of the earth with the speed of thought. I wandered alone, ethereal, ghostlike in the astral, seeking out the places and palaces of the Earth, gaining education by watching others. Not even the most secret vaults were sealed to me, for I could wander as free as a thought to enter the Council Chambers of the world. The leaders of all lands passed before me in constant panorama, their thoughts naked to my probing eye.

“And now,” I thought, as dizzily I stumbled to my feet supported by la-

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mas, "Now I have to report all that I saw, all that I experienced, and then? Perhaps soon I shall have another similar experience to undergo. After that I shall have to journey into the Western world, to endure the hardship forecast."

With much training behind me, and much hardship too, I set out from Tibet to more training, and much more hardship. As I looked back, before crossing the Himalayas, I saw the early rays of the sun, peeping over the mountain ranges, touching the golden roofs of the Sacred Buildings and turning them into visions of breathtaking delight.

The Valley of Lhasa seemed still asleep, and even the Prayer Flags nodded drowsily at their masts. By the Pargo Kaling I could just discern a yak-train, the traders, early risers like me, setting out for India while I turned towards Chungking. Over the mountain ranges we went, taking the paths trodden by the traders bringing tea into Tibet, bricks of tea from China, tea which with tsampa was one of the staple foods eaten by Tibetans. 1927 it was when we left Lhasa, and made our way to Chotang, a little town on the river Brahmaputra. On we went to Kanting, down into the lowlands, through lush forests, through valleys steaming with dank vegetation, on we went suffering with our breathing, because we, all of us, were used to breathing air only at 15,000 feet or higher. The lowlands with their heavy atmosphere pressing upon us depressed our spirits, compressing our lungs, making us feel that we were drowning in air. On we went day after day, until after a thousand miles or more we reached the outskirts of the Chinese City Of Chungking.

Encamped for the night, our last night together, for on the morrow my companions would set off on the return journey to our beloved Lhasa, encamped together, we talked mournfully. It distressed me considerably that my comrades, my retainers, were already treating me as a person dead to the world, as a person condemned to live in the lowland cities. And so on the morrow I went to the University of Chungking, a University where almost all the professors, almost all the staff worked hard to ensure the success of the students, to help in any way possible, and only the very minute minority were difficult or uncooperative, or suffered from xenophobia.

In Chungking I studied to be a surgeon and a physician. I studied also to be an air pilot, for my life was mapped out, foretold in minutest detail, and I knew, as proved to be the case, that later I would do much in the air and in medicine. But in Chungking there were still only the mutterings of war to come and most of the people in this, an ancient and modern city combined, lived day by day enjoying their ordinary happiness, doing their ordinary tasks.

This was my first visit in the physical to one of the major cities, my first visit, in fact, to any city outside Lhasa, although in the astral form I had visited

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most of the great cities of the world, as anyone can if they will practice, for there is nothing difficult, nothing magical in the astral, it is as easy as walking, easier than riding a bicycle because on a bicycle one has to balance; in the astral one has merely to use the abilities and faculties which our birthright gave us.

While I was still studying at the University of Chungking I was summoned back to Lhasa because the Thirteenth Dalai Lama was about to die. I arrived there and took part in the ceremonies which followed His death, and then after attending to various business in Lhasa I again returned to Chungking. At a later interview with a Supreme Abbot, T'ai Shu, I was persuaded to accept a commission in the Chinese air force, and to go to Shanghai, a place which although I knew I had to visit had no attraction whatever for me. So once again I was uprooted and made my way to another home. Here on July 7th, 1937, the Japanese staged an incident at the Marco Polo Bridge.

This was the actual starting point of the China-Japanese war, and it made things very difficult indeed for us. I had to leave my quite lucrative practice in Shanghai and place myself at the disposal of the Shanghai Municipal Council for a time, but afterwards I devoted all my time to mercy flying for the Chinese forces. I and others flew to places where there was a great need of urgent surgery. We flew in old aircraft which were actually condemned for anything else but which were considered good enough for those who were not fighting but patching up bodies.

I was captured by the Japanese, after being shot down, and they treated me quite roughly. I did not look like a Chinaman, they did not quite know what I looked like, and so because of my uniform, because of my rank, they were thoroughly unpleasant.

I managed to escape and made my way back to the Chinese forces in the hope of continuing with my work. First I was sent to Chungking to have a change of scene before returning to active duty. Chungking was then a different place from the Chungking which I had known before. The buildings were new, or rather some of the old buildings had new fronts because the place had been bombed. The place was absolutely crowded and all types of businesses from the major cities of China were now congregating in Chungking in the hopes of escaping the devastation of the war which was raging elsewhere.

After recovering somewhat I was sent down to the coast under the command of General Yo. I was appointed as medical officer in charge of the hospital, but the "hospital" was merely a collection of paddy fields which were thoroughly waterlogged. The Japanese soon came along and captured us and killed all those patients who were unable to rise and walk. I was taken off again and

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treated remarkably badly because the Japanese recognized me as one who had escaped before, and they really did not like people who escape.

After some time I was sent to be Prison Medical Officer in charge of a prison camp for women of all nationalities. There, due to my specialized training in herbs, I was able to make the best use of the natural resources of the camp to treat patients who otherwise would have been denied all medication. The Japanese thought that I was doing too much for the prisoners and not letting them die enough, and so they sent me to a prison camp in Japan, a camp which they said was for terrorists. I was herded across the Sea of Japan in a leaky ship and we were very badly treated indeed. I was badly tortured by them, and their continual torture gave me pneumonia. They did not want me to die and so in their way they looked after me, and gave me treatment. When I was recovering—I did not let the Japanese know how well I was recovering—the earth shook; I thought it was an earthquake, and then I looked out of the window and found that the Japanese were running in terror, and all the sky turned red, it looked as if the sun was obscured. Although I did not know it, this was the atom bombing of Hiroshima, the day of the first bomb on October 6th, 1945.

The Japanese had no time for me, they needed all their time to look after themselves, I thought, and so I managed to pick up a uniform, a cap, and a pair of heavy sandals. Then I tottered out into the open air through the narrow unguarded doorway, and managed to make my way down to the shore where I found a fishing boat. Apparently the owner had fled in terror as the bomb dropped, for he was nowhere in sight. The boat idly rocked at its moorings. In the bottom there were a few pieces of stale fish already starting to give off the odor of decay. There was a discarded can nearby which had stale water in it, drinkable, but only just. I managed to hack away the flimsy rope holding the boat to the shore, and cast off. The wind filled out the ragged sail when I managed to hoist it hours later, and the boat headed out into the unknown. The effort was too much for me. I just toppled to the bottom in a dead faint.

A long time after, how long I cannot say, I can only judge the passage of time by the state of decomposition of the fish, I awakened to the dimness of a dawn. The boat was racing on, the little waves breaking over the bows. I was too ill with pneumonia to bale, and so I just had to lie with my shoulders and the bottom of my body in the salt water, in all the refuse which swilled about. Later in the day the sun came out with blinding power. I felt as if my brains were being boiled in my head, as if my eyes were being burned out. I felt as if my tongue was growing to be the size of my arm, dry, aching. My lips and my cheeks were cracked. The pain was too much for me. I felt that my lungs were bursting again, and I knew that once more pneumonia had attacked both lungs.

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The light of the day faded from me, and I sank back into the bilge water, unconscious.

Time had no meaning, time was just a series of red blurs, punctuated by darkness. Pain raged through me and I hovered at the border between life and death. Suddenly there was a violent jolt, and the screech of pebbles beneath the keel. The mast swayed as if it would snap, and the tattered rag of a sail fluttered madly in the stiff breeze. I slid forward in the bottom of the boat, unconscious amid the stinking, swirling water.

“Gee, Hank, dere’s a gook in de bottom of de boat, sure looks like a stiff to me!” The nasal voice roused me to a flicker of consciousness. I lay there, unable to move, unable to show that I was still alive.

“Whatsamadder wid ya? Scairt of a corpse? We want da boat, don’t we? Give me a hand and we toss him out.”

Heavy footsteps rocked the boat, and threatened to crush my head. “Man oh man!” said the first voice, “Dat poor guy he sure took a beating from exposure. Mebbe he still breathes, Hank, what ya think.”

“Aw, stop bellyachin. He’s good as dead. Toss him out. We got no time to waste” Strong, harsh hands grabbed me by the feet and head. I was swung once, twice, and then let go and I sailed over the side of the boat to fall with a bone-rattling crash on to a pebble-and-sand beach. Without a backward glance, the two men heaved and strained at the stranded boat. Grunting and cursing they labored, throwing aside small rocks and stones. At last the boat broke free and with a grating scrunch floated slowly backwards into the water.

In a panic, for some reason unknown to me, the two men scrambled frenziedly aboard and went off in a series of clumsy tacks.

The sun blazed on. Small creatures in the sand bit me, and I suffered the tortures of the damned. Gradually the day wore out, until at last the sun set, blood-red and threatening. Water lapped at my feet, crept up to my knees. Higher. With stupendous effort I crawled a few feet, digging my elbows into the sand, wriggling, struggling. Then oblivion.

Hours later, or it may have been days, I awakened to find the sunlight streaming in upon me. Shakily I turned my head and looked about. The surroundings were wholly unfamiliar. I was in a small one-roomed cottage, with sea sparkling and glistening in the distance. As I turned my head I saw an old Buddhist priest watching me. He smiled and came towards me, sitting on the floor by my side. Haltingly, and with some considerable difficulty, we conversed. Our languages were similar but not identical, and with much effort,

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substituting and repeating words, we discussed the position.

“For some time,” the priest said, “I have known that I would have a visitor of some eminence, one who had a great task in life. Although old, I have lingered on until my task was completed.”

The room was very poor, very clean, and the old priest was obviously on the verge of starvation. He was emaciated and his hands shook with weakness and age. His faded, ancient robe was patterned with neat stitches where he had repaired the ravages of age and accidents.

“We saw you thrown from the boat,” he said.

“For long we thought you were dead and we could not get to the beach to make sure because of marauding bandits. At nightfall two men of the village went out and brought you here to me. But that was five days ago; you have been very ill indeed. We know that you will live to journey afar and life will be hard.”

Hard! Why did everyone tell me so often that life would be hard? Did they think I liked it? Definitely it was hard, always had been, and I hated hardship as much as anyone.

“This is Najin,” the priest continued. “We are on the outskirts. As soon as you are able, you will have to leave for my own death is near.”

For two days I moved carefully around, trying to regain my strength, trying to pick up the threads of life again. I was weak, starved, and almost beyond caring whether I lived or died. A few old friends of the priest came to see me and suggested what I should do, and how I should travel. On the third morning as I awakened, I saw the old priest lying stiff and cold beside me. During the darkness he had relinquished his hold upon life, and had departed.

With the help of an old friend of his, we dug a grave and buried him. I wrapped what little food was left in a cloth, and with a stout stick to help me, I departed.

A mile or so and I was exhausted. My legs shook and my head seemed to spin, making my vision blurry. For a time I lay by the side of the coast road, keeping out of sight of passersby, for I had been warned that this was a dangerous district indeed for strangers. Here, I was told, a man could lose his life if his expression did not please the armed thugs who roamed at large terrorizing the district.

Eventually I resumed my journey and made my way to Unggi. My informants had given me very clear instructions on how to cross the border into

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Russian territory.

My condition was bad, frequent rests were necessary, and on one such occasion I was sitting by the side of the road idly watching the heavy traffic. My eyes wandered from group to group until I was attracted to five Russian soldiers, heavily armed and with three huge mastiffs. For some reason, at the same time, one of the soldiers chanced to look at me. With a word to his companions he unleashed the three dogs which came towards me in a blue of speed, their snarling fangs slavering with fierce excitement. The soldiers started towards me, fingering their sub-machine guns. As the dogs came, I sent friendly thoughts to them, animals had no fear or dislike of me. Suddenly they were upon me, tails wagging, licking and slobbering over me and nearly killing me with friendship, for I was very weak. A sharp command, and the dogs cowered at the feet of the soldiers, now standing over me.

"Ah!" said the corporal in charge, "You must be a good Russian and a native here, otherwise the dogs would have torn you to pieces. They are trained for just that. Watch awhile and you will see."

They walked away, dragging the reluctant dogs, who wanted to stay with me. A few minutes later the dogs leaped urgently to their feet and dashed off to the undergrowth at the side of the road. There were horrible screams suddenly choked off by frothy bubbling. A rustling behind me, and as I turned, a bloody hand, bitten off at the wrist, was dropped at my feet while the dog stood there wagging his tail!

"Comrade," said the corporal, strolling over, "you must be loyal indeed for Serge to do that. We are going to our base at Kraskino. You are on the move, do you want a ride that far with five dead bodies?"

"Yes, Comrade corporal, I should be much obliged," I replied.

Leading the way, with the dogs walking beside me wagging their tails, he took me to a half track vehicle with a trailer attached. From one corner of the trailer a thin stream of blood ran to splash messily on the ground. Casually glancing in at the bodies piled there, he looked more intently at the feeble struggle of a dying man. Pulling out his revolver he shot him in the head, then re-holstered his gun and walked off to the half track without a backward glance.

I was given a seat on the back of the half track. The soldiers were in a good mood, boasting that no foreigner ever crossed the Border when they were on duty, telling me that their platoon held the Red Star award for competency. I told them that I was making my way to Vladivostok to see the great city for the first time, and hoping I would have no difficulty with the language.

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“Aw!” guffawed the corporal. “We have a supply truck going there tomorrow, taking these dogs for a rest, because with too much human blood they get too savage so that even we cannot handle them. You have a way with them. Look after them for us and we will take you to Vladi tomorrow. You understand us, you will be understood everywhere in this district—this is not Moscow!”

So I, a confirmed hater of Communism, spent that night as a guest of the soldiers of the Russian Frontier Patrol. Wine, women and song were offered me, but I pleaded age and ill-health. With a good plain meal inside me, the best for a long, long time, I went to bed on the floor, and slept with an untroubled conscience.

In the morning we set out for Vladivostok, the corporal, one other rank, three dogs and me. And so, through the friendship of fierce animals, I got to Vladivostok without trouble, without walking, and with good food inside me.

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CHAPTER THREE

The road was dusty and full of holes. As we drove along we passed gangs of women in the charge of an armed overseer, filling up the deepest of the holes with stones and with anything at hand. As we passed, the soldiers with me yelled ribald remarks and made suggestive gestures.

We passed through a populated district and on, on until we came to grim buildings which must have been a prison. The halftrack swept on and into a cobbled courtyard. No one was in sight. The men looked about in consternation. Then, as the driver switched off the engine we became immediately aware of a tremendous clamor, the shouting of men and the fierce barking of dogs. We hurried towards the source of the sound, I with the soldiers. Passing through an open door set in a high stone wall we saw a strong fenced enclosure which seemed to contain about fifty huge mastiffs.

Quickly a man on the edge of the crowd of soldiers outside the enclosure gabbled out his story. The dogs, with human blood-lust upon them had got out of hand and had killed and devoured two of their keepers. A sudden commotion, and as the crowd shifted and swayed, I saw a third man, clinging high up on the wire fence, lose his grip on the wire and fall among the dogs. There was a horrid scream, a really blood chilling sound, and then nothing but a snarling mass of dogs.

The corporal turned to me, "Hey, you! You can control dogs." Then, turning to a soldier beside him, "Ask the Comrade Captain to come this way, say we have a man here who can control dogs."

As the soldier hurried off I nearly fainted with fright on the spot. Me? Why always me for the difficulties and dangers? Then as I looked at the dogs I thought, "Why not? These animals are not so fierce as Tibetan mastiffs, and these soldiers smell of fear to the dogs and so the dogs attack."

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An arrogant-looking captain strode through the crowd, which parted respectfully before him. Stopping a few feet from me he looked me up and down, and a disdainful sneer passed over his face. "Faugh, corporal," he said haughtily, "What have we here? An ignorant native priest?"

"Comrade Captain," said the corporal, "This man was not attacked by our dogs, Serge bit off the hand of a frontier-crosser and gave it to him. Send him into the enclosure, Comrade Captain."

The captain frowned, shuffled his feet in the dust, and industriously bit his nails. At last he looked up. "Yes, I will do it," he said. "Moscow said that I must not shoot any more dogs, but they did not tell me what to do when the dogs had the blood-lust. This man, if he is killed, well, it was an accident. If he should live, though very unlikely, we will reward him." He turned and paced about, then stood looking at the dogs gnawing at the bones of the three keepers whom they had killed and eaten. Turning to the corporal, he said, "See to it, corporal, and if he succeeds, you are a sergeant." With that he hastened away.

For a time the corporal stood wide-eyed. "Me, a sergeant?"

Man!" he said, turning to me, "You tame the dogs and every man of the Frontier Patrol will be your friend. Get in."

"Comrade corporal," I replied, "I should like the other three dogs to go in with me, they know me and they know these dogs."

"So it shall be," he answered, "Come with me and we will get them."

We turned and went out to the trailer of the half track. I fondled the three dogs, letting them lick me, letting them put their smell on me. Then, with the three dogs jostling and bounding around me, I went to the barred entrance of the enclosure. Armed guards stood by in case any dog escaped. Quickly the gate was opened a trifle, and I was roughly thrust inside.

Dogs rushed at me from everywhere. The snapping jaws of "my" three discouraged most from coming too close to me, but one huge, ferocious beast, obviously the leader sprang murderously at my throat. For that I was well prepared, and as I stepped aside I gave him a quick thrust in the throat, a judo (or karate as people now term it) thrust which killed him before he touched the ground. The body was covered with a seething, struggling mass of dogs almost before I could jump out of the way. The snarling and snapping noises were hideous.

For a few moments I waited, unarmed, defenseless, thinking only kind and friendly thoughts towards the dogs, telling them by thought that I was not

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afraid of them, that I was their master. Then they turned, and I had a moment of revulsion as I saw the bare skeleton of what had moments ago been the leader. The dogs turned towards me. I sat upon the ground and willed them to do the same. They crouched before me, in a half circle, paws outstretched, grinning, tongues lolling lazily, and tails sweeping from side to side.

I stood up, and called Serge to my side. Putting my hand on his head, I said loudly, "From now on, you, Serge, will be leader of all these dogs, and you will obey me and will see that they obey me."

From outside the enclosure came a spontaneous roar of applause. I had forgotten all about the soldiers! As I turned I saw that they were waving their hands in friendship. The captain, his face suffused with excitement, came close to the wire and yelled, "Bring out the bodies of the keepers or their skeletons." Grimly I walked to the first body, a shredded, bloody mass, with the chest bones bare of flesh. I took it by an arm and pulled, but the arm came off at the shoulder. Then I pulled the man by the head, with his entrails dragging along behind. There was a gasp of horror, and I saw that Serge was walking beside me, carrying the man's arm.

Laboriously I removed all three bodies, or what was left of them. Then, really exhausted with the strain, I stepped to the gate and was let out.

The captain stood before me. "You stink!" he said. "Get cleaned of the filth of those bodies. You shall remain here for a month looking after the dogs. After a month they return to their patrols and you can go. You shall have the pay of a corporal." He turned to the corporal and said, "As promised, you are now a sergeant as from this moment."

He turned and walked away, obviously quite delighted with the whole affair.

The sergeant beamed upon me. "You are a magic-maker! Never will I forget how you killed that dog. Never will I forget the sight of the captain hopping from foot to foot filming the whole affair. You have done a big thing for yourself. Last time we had a dog riot we lost six men and forty dogs. Moscow came down heavy on the captain's neck. Told him what would happen if he lost any more dogs. He will treat you good. You mess-in with us now. We don't ask questions. But come, you stink, as the captain said. Wash off all that filth. I always told Andrei he ate too much and smelled bad, now I have seen him in pieces I know I was right."

I was so tired, so exhausted, that even such macabre humor as this did not shock me.

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A group of men, corporals, in the mess hall, guffawed loudly and said something to the sergeant. He roared, and hastened over to me. "Haw! Haw! Comrade priest," he bellowed, eyes streaming with mirth. "They say that you have so much of Andrei's inside on your outside that you should have all his possessions now he is dead. He has no relatives. We are going to call you Comrade Corporal Andrei for as long as you are here. All that was his is now yours. And you won me many rubles when I bet on you in the enclosure. You are my friend."

Sergeant Boris was quite a good fellow at heart. Uncouth, rude in manner, and without any pretence of education, he still showed much friendship to me for securing his promotion and for the large number of rubles he had won on me. "I would have been a corporal all my life else," he said. A number of men had been saying that I had not a chance in the dog enclosure. Boris had heard, and said, "My man is good. You should have seen him when we set the dogs on him. Didn't move. Sat like a statue. The dogs thought he was one of them. He will get that crowd straightened out. You'll see!"

"Bet on it, Boris?" cried one man.

"Take you three months to pay," said Boris. As a direct outcome, he had won about three and a half years' pay and was grateful.

That night, after a very ample supper, for the Border Patrol men lived well, I slept in a warm hut by the side of the dog enclosure. The mattress was well stuffed with dried esparto grass, and the men had obtained new blankets for me. I had every reason to be grateful for the training which gave me such an understanding of animals' nature.

At first light I was dressed and went to see the dogs. I had been shown where their food was kept, and now I saw that they had a very good feed indeed. They clustered around me, tails awag, and every so often one would rear up and put his paws on my shoulders. At one such time I happened to look around, and there was the captain, outside of the wire of course, looking on. "Ah! Priest," he said, "I merely came to see why the dogs were so quiet. Feeding time was a time of madness and fights, with the keeper standing outside and throwing food in, with the dogs tearing at each other to get their share. I will ask you no questions, Priest. Give me your word to remain here for four to five weeks until the dogs all move out and you can have the run of the place and go to the city when you want to."

"Comrade Captain," I replied, "I will gladly give you my word to remain here until all these dogs leave. Then I will be on my way."

"Another matter, Priest," said the captain. "At the next feeding time I will

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bring my cine camera and take a film so that the Superiors can see how we keep our dogs in order. Go to the Quartermaster and draw a new corporal's uniform, and if you can find anyone to help you in the enclosure, get them to clean it thoroughly. If they are afraid, do it yourself."

"I will do it myself, Comrade Captain," I replied, "then the dogs will not be upset."

The captain nodded curtly, and marched off, obviously a very happy man that he could now show how he managed the blood-lusting dogs! For three days I did not move more than a hundred yards from the dog enclosure.

These men were "trigger-happy" and thought nothing of shooting into the bushes "in case there should be spies hiding" as they put it.

For three days I rested, regaining my strength, and mixing with the men. Getting to know them, getting to know their habits. Andrei had been much the same size as me, so his clothes fitted reasonably well. Everything of his had to be washed and washed again, though, because he had not been noted for cleanliness. Many times the captain approached me, trying to engage me in conversation, but while he seemed genuinely interested and friendly enough, I had to remember my role of a simple priest who merely understood the Buddhist Scriptures, and dogs! He would sneer at religion, saying that there was no afterlife, no God, nothing but Father Stalin. I would quote Scriptures, never exceeding the knowledge that a poor village priest could be expected to have. At one such discussion, Boris was present, leaning up against the dog compound idly chewing a sliver of grass.

"Sergeant," exclaimed the captain in exasperation, "the Priest has never been out of his little village. Take him around and show him the City. Take him on patrol to Artem and to Razdol'noye. Show him life. He only knows about death, thinking that that is life." He spat on the ground, lit a contraband cigarette, and stalked away.

"Yes, come on, Priest, you have stayed with the dogs so long you are beginning to look like them. Though I must admit that you have them well-behaved now. And you did win for me a pile of money. I float on air with it, Priest, and must spend it before I die."

He led the way to a car, got in, and motioned for me to do the same. He started the engine, moved the gear lever, and let in the clutch. Off we went, bouncing on the rutted roads, roaring into the narrow streets of Vladivostok. Down by the harbor there were many ships, almost more ships than I had known existed in the world.

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“Look, Priest,” said Boris, “those ships have captured goods. Goods which were going to be ‘lendlease’ from the Americans to some other country. They think the Japanese captured them, but we ship the cargoes over The Railway (the Trans-Siberian Railway) back to Moscow where the Party Bosses have what they think is first pick. We have first pick because we have an arrangement with the docks. We turn a blind eye on their doings while they turn a blind eye on ours. Have you ever had a watch, Priest?”

“No,” I replied, “I have owned very little in my life. I know the time by the position of the sun and the shadows.”

“You must have a watch, Priest!” Boris speeded up the car and shortly we drew alongside a freighter moored to the dock side. The ship was streaked with red rust and sparkling with dried salt spray. The journey round the Golden Horn had been a hard and rough one. Cranes were swinging their long jibs, unloading the produce from different parts of the world. Men were shouting, gesticulating, manipulating cargo nets, and pulling on hawsers. Boris jumped out, dragging me with him, and rushed madly up the gangplank, still with me in tow.

“We want watches, Cap’n,” he bawled at the first man in uniform. “Watches, for the arm.”

A man with a more ornate uniform than the others appeared and motioned us to his cabin. “Watches, Cap’n,” bawled Boris. “One for him and two for me. You want to come ashore, Cap’n? Good time ashore. Do what you like. Girls, get drunk, we not interfere. We want watches.”

The captain smiled, and poured drinks. Boris drank his noisily, and I passed mine to him. “He no drink, Cap’n, he a Priest turned dog watcher, good dog watcher, too, good fellow,” said Boris.

The captain went to a space beneath his bunk and drew out a box. Opening it, he displayed perhaps a dozen wrist watches. Almost quicker than the eye could see, Boris picked two gold ones, and without bothering to wind them, slipped one on each arm.

“Take a watch, Priest,” commanded Boris. I reached out and took a chromium one. “This is a better one, Priest,” said the Captain. “This is a stainless steel, waterproof Omega, a far better watch.”

“Thank you, Captain,” I replied, “If you have no objection, I will have the one of your choice.”

“Now I know you are crazed, Priest,” said Boris, “a steel watch when you can have gold?”

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I laughed and replied, "Steel is good enough for me, you are a sergeant, but I am only a very temporary corporal."

From the ship we went to the Trans-Siberian Railroad sidings. Work gangs were busily loading the trucks with the choicest goods from the ships. From here the trucks would leave for Moscow, some six thousand miles away.

As we stood there, one train moved out. Two engines pulling a vast array of railroad cars, each engine with five wheels on each side. Giant things which were well kept and which were regarded almost as living creatures by the train crew. Boris drove along beside the tracks. Guards were everywhere; from pits in the ground armed men scanned the undersides of the passing trains, looking for stowaways.

"You seem to be very afraid of anyone illegally riding the trains," I said, "this is a thing which I do not understand. What harm could it do to allow people to take a ride?"

"Priest," sadly replied Boris, "you have no knowledge of Life, just as the captain said. Enemies of the Party, saboteurs, and capitalist spies would try to steal into our cities. No honest Russian would want to travel unless so directed by his Commissar."

"But are there many trying to take rides? What do you do with them when you see them?"

"Do with them. Why, shoot them, of course! Not many stowaways just here, but tomorrow I am going to Artem and I will take you. There you will see how we deal with such subversive elements. The train crews, when they catch one, tie his hands, slip a rope round his neck, and throw him off. Makes a mess of the track, though, and encourages the wolves." Boris slumped in the driving seat, his eyes scanning the packed railroad cars trundling along.

As if electrified, he sat bolt upright and jabbed the accelerator right down. The car leaped ahead and raced past the head of the train. Slamming on the brakes, Boris jumped out, grabbed his sub-machine-gun, and hid by the side of the car. Slowly the train rumbled by. I caught a glimpse of someone riding between two railroad coaches, and then there was the stuttering stammer of the sub-machine-gun.

The body tumbled to the ground between the tracks. "Got him!" said Boris triumphantly, as he carefully cut another nick in the stock of his gun. "That makes fifty-three, Priest, fifty-three enemies of the State accounted for."

I turned away, sick at heart, and afraid to show it, for Boris would have shot me as easily as he had shot that man if he had known that I was not the

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village priest.

The train passed on, and Boris walked to the riddled, bleeding body. Turning it over with his foot he looked at the face, and said, "I recognize this as a railroad worker. He should not have been riding. Perhaps I should blow off his face so there will be no difficult questions." So saying, he put the muzzle of the gun near the face of the dead man and pulled the trigger.

Leaving the now headless corpse, "I have never been on a train, Boris," I said.

"Well," he replied, "tomorrow we will go to Artem by goods train and you can look around. I have some good friends there I want to meet now that I am a sergeant." For long I had cherished the idea of stowing away aboard some ship and steaming off to America. I mentioned ship-stowaways to Boris.

"Boris," I said, "you spend all your time stopping people at the frontier and making sure there are no stowaways on the trains. Yet all these ships, anyone could walk aboard and stay."

Boris leaned back and roared with laughter. "Priest," he guffawed, "you must be a simpleton! The Water Guards board the ships a mile from the shore and they check all members of the crew. Then they seal all hatches and ventilators, and pour cyanide gas into the holds and other spaces, not forgetting the lifeboats. They get a good bag of stiffs from reactionaries who do not know about this."

I felt very sick at the callous manner in which these men treated the whole affair as sport, and I hastily changed my mind about stowing aboard ship! Here I was in Vladivostok, but I had my allotted task in life, and as the Prophecy had stated, I had to go first to America, then to England, and back to the North American continent. The problem was, how to get out of this part of the world. I determined to find out as much as possible about the Trans-Siberian Railway, where the checks and searches ended, and what happened at the Moscow end.

The next day I exercised and fed the dogs early, and with them well settled, I set out with Boris and three other Guards. We traveled some fifty miles to an outpost where the three Guards were to replace three others. All the way the men were chatting about how many "escapees" they had shot, and I picked up some useful information. I learned the point at which there were no more checks, I learned that if one was careful one could travel to the outskirts of Moscow without being caught.

Money was going to be the problem, that I could see. I made money by standing duty for other men, by treating their ills, and through the good offices

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of some of them, treating wealthy Party members in the city itself. Like others, I arranged to visit ships, and took my share of the spoils of new train loads. All my “bounty” was turned into rubles. I was preparing to cross Russia.

Nearly five weeks later the captain told me that the dogs were now going back to their patrol stations. A new Commissar was coming, and I must leave before he arrived. Where was I going? he asked. Knowing my man by now, I replied, “I will remain in Vladivostok, Comrade Captain. I like it here.”

His face grew apprehensive. “You must leave, get right out of the district. Tomorrow.”

“But Comrade Captain, I have nowhere to go, and no money,” I answered.

“You shall be given rubles, food, clothing, and taken out of this district.”

“Comrade Captain,” I reiterated, “I have nowhere to go. I have worked hard here, and I want to stay in Vladivostok.”

The captain was adamant. “Tomorrow we send men to the very limit of our area, to the boundary of Voroshilov. You shall be taken there and left. I will give you a letter saying that you have helped us and you have gone there with our permission. Then the Voroshilov Police will not arrest you.”

This was far better than I had hoped. I wanted to get to Voroshilov, because that was where I intended to board the train. I knew that if I could get to the other side of that city I should be fairly safe.

The next day, with a number of other men, I climbed aboard a fast troop-carrier and we roared up the road on the way to Voroshilov. This time I was wearing a good suit of clothes, and had a large rucksack stuffed with belongings. I also had a shoulder bag full of food. It gave me not a qualm to remember that the clothes I wore had been taken from a dead ship-jumper.

“Don’t know where you are going, Priest,” said Boris, “but the captain has said that he trained those dogs, so you had to leave. You can sleep at the outpost tonight, and be on your way in the morning.”

That night I was unsettled. I was sick and tired of roaming from place to place. Sick and tired of living with Death nudging my elbow. It was utterly lonely living with these people who were so alien, so absolutely opposed to my peaceful way of living.

In the morning, after a good breakfast, I said good-bye to Boris and the others, shouldered my load, and set off. Mile after mile I covered, avoiding the main road, trying to circle Voroshilov. There was the roar of a speeding car behind me, the squeal of hastily-applied brakes and I found myself looking

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down the muzzle of a sub-machine-gun.

“Who are you? Where are you going?” snarled a scowling corporal.

“I am on my way to Voroshilov,” I replied. “I have a letter here from Comrade Captain Vassily.”

Snatching the letter from me, he tore it open, frowning in the concentration of reading. Then his face broke into a broad grin. “We have just come from Sergeant Boris,” he said. “Get in, we will drive you to Voroshilov and let you off where you say.”

This was a nuisance, I was trying to avoid the city! But I climbed into the patrol car and was speedily driven to Voroshilov. I alighted near the Police Headquarters, and as the car shot off into the garage, I walked smartly along, trying to cover as many miles as possible before nightfall.

I planned to camp out near the Railroad and observe what happened for a night and day before climbing aboard. Passenger trains were stopped and checked at Voroshilov, but the goods trains stopped just outside, possibly so that the local people should not see how many stowaways were killed. I watched and watched, and decided that my only hope was to get on a train just as it was pulling out. On the night of the second day a very desirable train stopped. A train which my experience told me had many “lend-lease” cargoes aboard. This was not one to be missed, I thought, as I eased myself along the tracks, peering under, testing locked doors, opening those which were not locked.

Every now and then a shot rang out, followed by the thud of a falling body. Dogs were not used here for fear that they would be killed by the wheels. I rolled in the dust, making myself as dirty as possible.

The guards came by, peering at the train, shouting to each other, flashing powerful lamps. No one thought to look behind the train, and the train only engaged their attention. I, prone on the ground behind them, thought, “my dogs would be far more efficient than this. Dogs would soon have found me!”

The men, satisfied with their search, strolled off. I rolled sideways to the track and darted between the wheels of a railroad car. Quickly I climbed on to an axle and hitched a rope I had ready to a projecting lug. Fastening it to the other side, I drew myself up and tied myself to the bottom of the railroad car floor in the only position which would escape scrutiny. This I had planned for a month. The train started with a jerk which nearly dislodged me, and as I anticipated, a jeep with a spotlight came racing alongside, with armed guards peering at the axle-bars. I drew myself tighter to the floor, feeling as a naked man would before a convention of nuns! The jeep raced on, turned and came back,

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and passed out of my sight and life. The train rumbled on. For five or six miles I held grimly to my painful position, then convinced that the danger was over, I slowly eased myself out from the rope and managed to balance on one of the covers of the axles.

For a time I rested as best I could, getting feeling back into my cramped and aching limbs. Then slowly, cautiously, I edged myself along to the end of the railroad car and managed to grasp an iron bar. For perhaps half an hour I sat on the couplings, then drawing myself up on that swaying platform, I crept blindly around the end and on to the roof. It was quite dark now, except for the starlight.

The moon had not yet risen, and I knew that I had to work fast to get inside a wagon before any prowling trainman saw me in the Siberian moonlight. On the roof I tied an end of the rope around me, passed the other end around the roof rail, and slid cautiously down over the side, paying out the rope I held. Bumping and scraping along the rough edges, I soon managed to unlock the door with a key which I had obtained in Vladivostok for the purpose—one key fitted all the train locks.

It proved to be fantastically difficult to slide the door open as I swung like a pendulum, but sight of the first rays of the bright moon gave me that extra impetus, the door slid open and I crawled exhaustedly inside. Relinquishing the free end of the rope, I jerked and pulled until the whole length was in my hands. Shaking with utter exhaustion, I slid the door shut and dropped to the floor.

Two or three days later—one loses all count of time under such conditions—I felt the train slowing. Hurrying to the door, I opened it a crack and peered out. There was nothing to be seen except snow, so I rushed to the other side. Train guards were running along after a group of refugees. Obviously a big search was under way. Picking up my belongings, I dropped over the side and into the snow. Dodging and twisting between the wheels of the trucks I managed to completely confuse my snow-trail. While I was still at it, the train started to move, and I grabbed desperately at the nearest icy coupling. By great good fortune I managed to get my arms around one, and I hung there, feet dangling, until a sudden jolt enabled me to get my legs up as well.

Standing up, I found that I was at the end of a truck which was covered with a stiff, frozen tarpaulin. The knots were solid ice, the heavy canvas was like sheet iron. I stood upon the swaying, ice-covered couplings battling with the icy knots. I breathed upon them, hoping that they would soften, but my breath froze and made the ice thicker. I dragged the rope backwards and forwards against the metal of the truck side. Darkness was falling when the last

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frayed strand parted, and I was able, with immense effort, to prize up an edge of the canvas and crawl inside. Inside, as I fell to the floor, a man jumped at me, flailing a piece of sharp steel at my throat. Instinct and habit came to my rescue, and the man was soon nursing a broken arm and moaning.

Two other men came at me, one with an iron bar and one with a broken jagged bottle. To one with my training, they presented no real problem, and they were soon disarmed. Here was the law of the jungle, the strongest man was king!

Now that I had beaten them, they were my servants. The wagon was full of grain which we ate just as it was. For drink we collected snow or sucked ice which we broke from the tarpaulin. We could get no warmth, for there was nothing to burn, and the train crew would have seen the smoke. I could manage with the cold, but the man with the broken arm froze solid one night and we had to dump him over the side.

Siberia is not all snow, parts of it are mountainous, like the Canadian Rockies, and other parts are as green as Ireland. Now, though, we were troubled with snow, for this was the worst season in which to be traveling.

We found that the grain disturbed us badly, it caused us to swell up, and gave us severe dysentery, weakening us so much that we hardly cared whether we lived or died. At last the dysentery abated, and we suffered the sharp pangs of starvation. I lowered myself over the side with my rope and scraped the grease from the axle boxes. We ate that, retching horribly in the process.

The train rumbled on. Around the end of Lake Baykal, on to Omsk. Here, as I knew, it would be shunted and reassembled, I should have to leave before reaching the city, and jump aboard another train which had been remade.

There is no point in detailing all the trials and tribulations of the change of trains, but I, in company with a Russian and a Chinaman, managed to board a fast freight train to Moscow.

The train was in good condition. My carefully-preserved key opened a wagon and we clambered inside, hidden by the darkness of a moonless night. The wagon was very full, and we had to force our way in. There was no glimmer of light and we had no idea of the contents. A pleasant surprise awaited us in the morning. We were starving, and I saw that one corner of the wagon was stacked with Red Cross parcels which had apparently not reached their destination, but had been "liberated" by the Russians. Now we lived well. Chocolate, canned foods, canned milk, everything. We even found in a parcel a little stove with a supply of solid, smokeless fuel.

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Investigating the bales, we found them to be full of clothing and articles which could have been looted from Shanghai stores. Cameras, binoculars, watches. We fitted ourselves out in good clothes, for ours were in a shocking state. Our greatest need was for water. We had to depend upon snow which we could scrape off ledges.

Four weeks and six thousand miles after I left Vladivostok, the train was approaching Noginsk, some thirty or forty miles from Moscow. The three of us held a discussion and decided that as the train crews were becoming active—we heard them walking across our roofs—we would be wise to leave. Very carefully we inspected each other to make sure that there was nothing suspicious about us, then we picked a very good supply of food and “treasures” with which to barter. The Chinaman went first, and as we slid the door shut after him, I heard rifle fire. Three or four hours later the Russian dropped off, followed by me after a half hour interval.

I plodded along in the dark, quite sure of my way, for the Russian, a native of Moscow who had been exiled in Siberia, had carefully coached us. By morning I had covered a good twenty miles, and my legs, so badly battered in prison camps, were troubling me greatly.

In an eating place I showed my papers as a corporal in the Frontier Guards. These were Andrei's; I had been told that I could have all his belongings, and no one had thought of adding “except his official papers and Identity Card”.

The waitress looked doubtful, and called a policeman who was standing outside. He came in and there was much discussion. No, I had no food ration card, I had inadvertently left it in Vladivostok, food regulations were not enforced for the Guards at Vladivostok. The policeman fiddled with my papers, and then said, “You will have to eat on the Black Market until you can get to the Food Bureau and obtain another Card. They will have to get in touch with Vladivostok first.” With that he turned and walked away.

The waitress shrugged her shoulders. “Have what you like, Comrade, it will cost you five times the official price.”

She brought me some sour, black bread and some awful looking and worse tasting paste. She misunderstood my signs for “drink” and brought me some stuff which almost made me pass out on the spot. One sip of it, and I thought I had been poisoned. One sip was enough, but the waitress even charged me for water while she slurped up the vile brew for which I had paid so much.

As I left the policeman was waiting. He fell into step as I walked along.

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“This is very irregular, Comrade, walking with a pack on your back. I wonder if I should not take you to the Station for interrogation. Have you a spare watch on you, Comrade, to make me forget my duty?”

Silently I fumbled in my pocket, and then I produced one of the watches I had taken from the train. The policeman took it, glanced at it, and said, “Moscow, straight ahead. Avoid the main thoroughfare and you will be all right.” Then he turned and walked away.

I plodded along the side roads, keeping a good lookout for policemen who might demand watches. It seemed to me, from my own experience, that Russians had a simply dreadful craving for watches. Many of them could not tell the time, but the mere fact of having a watch seemed to satisfy them in some strange manner. An emaciated man tottering ahead of me suddenly swayed and fell on to his face in the gutter at the side of the road. Passersby did not even glance at him, but went on their way. I made as if to go to him when an old man just behind me muttered, “Careful, Comrade stranger, if you go to him the police will think you are looting. He is dead anyway. Starvation. It happens to hundreds here every day.” Nodding my thanks, I walked straight on. “This is a terrible place,” I thought, “with every man’s hand against his fellows. It must be because they have no religion to guide them.”

That night I slept behind the crumbling wall of a derelict Church. Slept, with about three hundred others for company. My rucksack was my pillow, and during the night I felt stealthy hands trying to unfasten the straps. A quick blow to the would-be thief’s throat sent him gasping and reeling backwards, and I was not troubled again.

In the morning I bought food on the Government Black Market, for in Russia the Government runs the Black Market, and then continued on my way. The Russian on the train had told me to pose as a tourist and to hang a camera (taken from the train) around my neck. I had no film, and in those days hardly knew one side of the camera from the other.

Soon I found myself in the better part of Moscow, the part that the ordinary tourist sees, for the ordinary tourist does not see “behind the scenes,” the misery, poverty and death which exists in the slum side streets. The Moscow River was before me, and I walked along its banks for a time before turning up into Red Square. The Kremlin, and the Tomb of Lenin impressed me not at all. I was used to the grandeur and sparkling beauty of the Potala. Near an entrance to the Kremlin a small group of people waited, apathetic, slovenly, looking as if they had been driven there like cattle. With a “swoosh” three huge black cars rushed out, across the Square, and disappeared into the obscurity of the streets. As people were looking dully in my direction, I half raised the camera. Sud-

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denly I felt a terrific pain shoot through my head. For a moment I thought that a building had fallen on me. I fell to the ground, and the camera was smashed from my hands.

Towering Soviet guards stood over me; one of them was methodically and unemotionally kicking me in the ribs in order to make me rise to my feet. Half stunned as I was, it was difficult for me to rise, so two policemen reached down and roughly dragged me to my feet. They fired questions at me, but they spoke so rapidly and in such a "Moscow accent" that I understood not a word. At last, tired of asking questions and getting no reply, they marched me off along Red Square, a policeman on each side, and one behind me with a huge revolver poking painfully into my spine.

We stopped at a dismal-looking building, and entered by a basement door. I was roughly pushed—shoved would be a better word—down some stone steps and into a small room. An officer was sitting at a table, with two armed guards standing by a wall of the room. The senior policeman in charge of me gabbled out a lengthy explanation to the officer, and placed my rucksack on the floor beside him.

The officer wrote what was obviously a receipt for me and for my belongings, and then the policemen turned and left. I was roughly pushed into another room, a very large one, and left standing before an immense desk, with an armed guard on each side of me. Some time later, three men came in and seated themselves at the desk and went through the contents of my rucksack. One rang for an attendant, and, when he entered, gave him my camera, giving him brusque instructions. The man turned, and went off, carefully carrying that inoffensive camera as if it were a bomb about to explode.

They kept on asking me questions which I could not understand. At last, they called an interpreter, then another, and another until they found one who could converse with me. I was stripped of my clothes and examined by a doctor. All the seams of my clothing were examined, and some of them were ripped open. At last my clothes were flung at me, less buttons, less belt and shoe laces. At a command the guards hustled me out of the room, carrying my clothes, and marched me along corridor after corridor. They made no sound, felt slippers were on their feet, nor did they speak to each other or to me. As we marched silently along, a really bloodcurdling scream rose and fell quavering on the still air. I involuntarily slowed down, but the guard behind me jumped at my shoulder with such force that I thought he had broken my neck.

At last we stopped at a red door. A guard unlocked it, and I was pushed in to fall headlong down three stone steps. The cell was dark and very damp. It was about six feet by twelve feet, with a foul and stinking mattress on the floor.

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For a quite unknown time I stayed there in the darkness, becoming hungrier and hungrier, wondering why mankind had such a savage nature.

After a very long interval, a hunk of sour black bread and a small jug of brackish water was passed in. The silent guard motioned for me to drink the water then. I took a gulp, and he snatched the jug from my lips, poured the water on the floor, and went out. The door closed silently.

There was no sound except occasional hideous screams which were quickly and violently suppressed. Time crawled on. I nibbled at the sour black bread. I was hungry and thought that I could have eaten anything, but this bread was terrible; it stank as if it had been dragged through a cesspool.

A long time after, so long that I feared I was quite forgotten, armed guards came silently to my cell. Not a word was spoken; they gestured for me to go with them. Having no choice, I did so, and we tramped through endless corridors, giving me the impression that we were retracing our steps time after time in order to build up a suspense. At last I was marched into a long room which had a brightly painted white wall at one end. Roughly the guards manacled my arms behind me, and turned me to face the white wall.

For long moments nothing happened, then very powerful, utterly dazzling lights were switched on so as to reflect from the white wall. It felt as if my eyeballs were being scorched even with my eyes shut. The guards wore dark glasses. The light beat down in waves. The sensation was as if needles were being pushed into my eyes.

A door softly opened and shut. The scrape of chairs and the rustle of papers. A low-voiced muttered conversation which I did not understand. Then, the blow of a rifle-butt between my shoulders, and the questioning began. Why had I a camera which had no film in it? Why had I the papers of a Frontier Guard stationed at Vladivostok. How? Why? When? Hour after hour the same stupid questions.

The light blazed on, giving me a splitting headache. A blow from a gun-butt if I refused to answer. The only respite was for a few moments every two hours when the guards and questioners were replaced by fresh ones; for the guards too because exhausted by the bright lights.

After what seemed to be endless hours, but which in reality could not have been more than six, I collapsed on the floor. Guards quite unemotionally began pricking me with their sharpened bayonets. To struggle to my feet with my arms fixed behind me was difficult, but I did it, again and again. When I became unconscious buckets of cesspool water were thrown over me. Hour after hour the questioning went on. My legs began to swell. My ankles became

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thicker than my thighs as the body fluids drained down and made the flesh waterlogged.

Always the same questions, always the same brutality. Sixty hours of standing. Seventy hours. The world was a red haze now, I was all but dead on my feet. No food, no rest, no respite. Just a drink of some sleep-preventing drug forced into my mouth. Questions. Questions. Questions. Seventy-two hours, and I heard no more, saw no more. The questions, the lights, the pain, all faded, and there was blackness.

An unspecified time elapsed, and I regained a pain-filled consciousness, flat on my back on the cold, wet floor of a reeking cell. It was agony to move, my flesh felt soggy and my back felt as if the spine were made of broken glass. No sound there was to show that others were alive, no glimmer of light to mark night from day. Nothing, but an eternity of pain, hunger and thirst. At last there was a chink of light as a guard roughly shoved a plate of food on to the floor.

A can of water slopped beside it. The door shut, and again I was alone with my thoughts in the darkness. Much later the guards came again, and I was dragged—I could not walk—to the Interrogation Room. There I had to sit and write my life history. For five days the same thing happened. I was taken to a room, given a pencil stub and paper and told to write everything about myself. For three weeks I remained in my cell, recovering slowly.

Once again I was taken to a room, where I stood before three high officials. One glanced at the others, looked at a paper in his hands, and told me that certain influential people had testified that I had helped people in Vladivostok. One testified that I had helped his daughter escape from a Japanese Prisoner of War camp.

“You will be released,” said the official, “and taken to Stryj, in Poland. We have a detachment of men going there. You will accompany them.”

Back to a cell—a better one this time—while my strength was built up enough to enable me to travel. At last I marched through the gate of the Lubianka Prison, Moscow, on my way to the West.

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CHAPTER FOUR

Outside the Lubyanka three soldiers were waiting. The prison guard who thrust me through the opened door handed a paper to the senior soldier, a corporal. "Sign here, Comrade, it is just to say you acknowledge receipt of a Deportee." The corporal dubiously scratched his head, licked the pencil and wiped his palms on his trouser legs before hesitatingly scribbling his name. The prison guard turned back without a word, and the Lubyanka door slammed shut—fortunately this time with me on the outside.

The corporal scowled at me. "Now, through you, I have had to sign a paper. Lenin only knows what will happen, I might even end up in the Lubyanka myself. Come on, get moving!"

The corporal took his place in front of me, and with a soldier on each side, I was marched through the streets of Moscow to a railway station. I had nothing to carry, everything I owned was upon me, my suit of clothes. The Russians had kept my rucksack, my watch, everything except the clothes which I actually wore. And those clothes? Heavy shoes with wooden soles, trousers, and a jacket. Nothing else. No underwear, no money, no food. Nothing.

Yes, there was something! I had in my pocket a paper saying that I was deported from Russia and that I was free to make my way to Russian-occupied Germany where I should report to the nearest police station.

At the Moscow railway station we sat and waited in the freezing cold. One after the other the soldiers wandered off and returned so that another could go. I sat on the stone platform and shivered. I was hungry. I felt ill and weak. At long last a sergeant and about a hundred men appeared. The sergeant marched down the platform and took a look at me.

"Do you want him to die?" he bawled at the corporal.

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“We have to deliver him alive at Lwow. See that he eats, we have six hours before the train leaves.”

The corporal and an ordinary soldier each took one of my arms and dragged me to my feet. The sergeant looked me in the face and said, “Hmm. Not a bad sort of fellow.” He looked at my papers which the corporal was carrying.

“My brother was in the Lubianka,” he said, making sure that none of his men were within listening distance. “He did nothing either. They sent him to Siberia. Now I will have you taken for food. Eat well, for after we reach Lwow, you will be on your own.” He turned away, and called two corporals. “Look after him, see he gets all the food and drink he wants, he has to leave us in good condition or the Commissar will say we kill prisoners.”

Wearily I went off between the two corporals. At a little eating place outside the station the senior corporal ordered great bowls of cabbage soup and loaves of black bread. The stuff stank of decayed vegetation, but I managed to get it down, as I was so hungry. I thought of the “soup” we had had in the Japanese Prison Camps, where bits of gristle spat out by the Japanese, and food which they left was collected and made into “soup” for the prisoners.

With a meal inside us, we were ready to leave. A corporal ordered more bread and three copies of Pravda. We wrapped our bread in the papers, first being sure that we did not desecrate any pictures of Stalin in the process, and then returned to the railway station.

The wait was terrible. Six hours in the freezing cold, sitting on a stone platform. Eventually we were all herded into a weary old train, and set off for Kiev. That night I slept propped up between two snoring Russian soldiers. There was not room for any of us to lie down, we were jammed in very tightly. The hard wooden seats were uncomfortable, and I wished that I could sit on the floor. The train jolted on, coming to a creaky halt, so it seemed, every time I had just managed to go to sleep. Very late the following night, after a painful journey of some four hundred and eighty miles or so, we drew into a second-rate station at Kiev. There was much bustling, much shouting, and we all marched off to the local barracks for the night. I was shoved into a cell and after many hours I was awakened from my sleep by the entry of a Commissar and his assistant. They asked me questions, endless questions, and after perhaps two or two and a half hours, they went out again.

For some time I tossed and turned, trying to get to sleep. Violent hands smacked my face, shouting “wake up, wake up, are you dead? Here is food. Hurry, you have minutes only before you leave.”

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Food? More cabbage soup. More sour black bread, and water to drink. I gulped the stuff down, afraid that I should have to go before I had finished my miserable meal. Gulped it down, and waited. Waited hours. Late that afternoon two Military Policemen entered, questioned me all over again, took my fingerprints once more, and then said, "We are late. There is no time for you to have a meal now. You may be able to get something at the railway station."

Outside the barracks, three troop-carriers were waiting. Forty soldiers and I crammed unbelievably into one, the others climbed aboard the two other vehicles, and we were off, jolting dangerously along the road to the station. Jammed so tight that I could scarce breathe. The driver of our troop-carrier seemed to be mad, far outstripping the other two cars. He drove as if all the devils of Communism were after him. We swayed and jolted in the back, all of us standing as there was not room to sit. We caromed down the road in a frenzy of speed, there was the shrill squeal of brakes too hastily applied, and the carrier slithered sideways.

The side in front of me ripped away in a shower of sparks as we collided with a thick stone wall. Screams, yells, and oaths, and a veritable sea of blood, and I found myself flying through the air. Flying, and I could see below me the wrecked carrier, now blazing furiously. A sensation of falling, a shattering crash, and blackness.

"Lobsang!" said a well-loved voice, the voice of my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup. "You are very ill, Lobsang, your body is still on Earth, but we have you here in a world beyond the Astral. We are trying to help you, because your task on Earth is not yet finished."

Mingyar Dondup? Ridiculous! He had been killed by the treacherous Communists when trying to arrange a peaceful settlement in Tibet. I had seen the dreadful wounds made when he was stabbed in the back. But of course, I had seen him several times since he had passed to the Heavenly Fields.

The light hurt my closed eyes. I thought that I was again facing that wall in the Lubianka Prison, and that the soldiers would again club me between the shoulders with their riflebutts. But this light was different, it did not hurt my eyes; that must have been the association of ideas, I thought dully.

"Lobsang, open your eyes and look at me!" The kind voice of my Guide warmed me and sent a thrill of pleasure through my being. I opened my eyes and looked about me. Bending over me I saw the Lama. He was looking better than I had ever seen him on Earth. His face looked ageless, his aura was of the purest colors without trace of the passions of Earth people. His saffron robe was of a material not of Earth, it positively glowed as if imbued with a life of its

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own. He smiled down at me and said, "My poor Lobsang. Man's inhumanity to Man has indeed been exemplified in your case, because you have lived through that which would have killed others many times over. You are here for a rest, Lobsang. A rest in what we call 'The Land of the Golden Light'. Here we are beyond the stage of reincarnating. Here we work to help peoples of many different worlds, not merely that called Earth. Your soul is bruised and your body is shattered. We have to patch you up, Lobsang, for the task has to be done, and there is no substitute for you."

I looked about me and saw that I was in what appeared to be a hospital. From where I lay I could look out over beautiful parkland, in the distance I could see animals grazing, or at play. There seemed to be deer, and lions, and all those animals which could not live together in peace on Earth, here were friends who gamboled as members of one family.

A rasping tongue licked my right hand, which hung limply over the side of the bed. As I looked, I saw Sha-lu, the immense guard cat of the Chakpori, one of my first friends there. He winked at me, and I felt the goose-pimples start out all over me as he said, "Ah, my friend Lobsang, I am glad to see you again even for this short while. You will have to return to Earth for a time, after leaving here, then in a few short years you will return to us for always."

A cat talking? Telepathic cat talk I knew well, and fully understood, but this cat actually uttered words, not merely telepathic messages. Loud chuckles caused me to look up at my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup. He really was enjoying himself, at my expense, I thought. My scalp prickled again; Sha-lu was standing on his hind legs by the bed, resting his elbows beside me. He and the Lama looked at me, then at each other; both chuckled. Both chuckled, I swear it!

"Lobsang," said my Guide, "you know there is no death, you know that upon leaving Earth at so-called 'death' the ego goes to that plane where he or she rests a while before preparing to reincarnate in a body which will afford opportunities for learning other lessons and progressing ever upwards. Here we are in a plane from whence there is no reincarnating. Here we live, as you see us now, in harmony, at peace, and with the ability to go anywhere at any time by what you would call 'super-astral traveling'. Here animals and humans, and other species too, converse by speech as well as by telepathy. We use speech when close, and telepathy when distant."

In the distance I could hear soft music, music which even I could understand. My tutors at the Chakpori had lamented long over my inability to sing or make music. Their hearts would have been gladdened, I thought, if they could have seen how I enjoyed this music. Across the luminous sky colors flitted and

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wavered as if accompanying the music.

Here, on this glorious landscape, the greens were greener, and the water bluer. Here were no trees gnarled by disease, no leaves with blight upon them. Here was only perfection. Perfection? Then what was I doing here? I was painfully far from perfect, as I well knew.

“You have fought the good fight, Lobsang, and you are here, for a holiday and to be encouraged, by right of attainment.” My Guide smiled benevolently as he spoke. I lay back, then started up in fright, “My body, where is my Earth body?”

“Rest, Lobsang, rest,” replied the Lama. “Rest and we will show you much when your strength is greater.”

Slowly the light in the room faded from golden to a restful purplish haze. I felt a cool, strong hand placed upon my forehead, and a soft, furry paw rested in the palm of my right hand, and I knew no more.

I dreamed that I was again upon Earth. I gazed down, emotionless while Russian soldiers raked through the ruined troop-carrier, pulling out burned bodies and bits of bodies. I saw a man look up, and point. Heads turned upwards in answer to his gestures, and I looked as well. There was my broken body teetering across the top of a high wall.

Blood was running from the mouth and nostrils. I watched while my body was removed from the wall and placed in an ambulance. As the car drove off to a hospital I hovered above and saw all. My Silver Cord was intact, I observed; it glistened like blue morning mists in the valleys.

Russian orderlies pulled out the stretcher, not being particularly careful. Joltingly they carried it into an operating theatre and rolled my body on to a table. Nurses cut off my bloodstained clothes and dropped them in a refuse bin. An X-ray unit took photographs, and I saw that I had three broken ribs, one had perforated my left lung. My left arm was broken in two places, and my left leg was broken again at the knee and at the ankle. The broken end of a soldier's bayonet had penetrated my left shoulder, narrowly missing a vital artery. The women surgeons sighed noisily, wondering where to start. I seemed to float over the operating table, watching, wondering if their skill would be great enough to patch me up. A gentle tugging upon my Silver Cord, and I found myself floating up through the ceiling, seeing in my passing, patients in their beds in wards above. I drifted up and away, out into space, out among the limitless stars, beyond the astral, through etheric plane after plane, until I reached again the “Land of the Golden Light”.

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I started, trying to peer through the purple mist. "He has returned," a gentle voice said, and the mists receded giving way to the glorious Light again. My Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, stood beside me, looking down. Sha-lu was lying on the bed beside me, gently purring. Two other High Personages were in the room. When I saw them, they were looking out of the window watching the people strolling many feet below. At my gasp of surprise they turned and smiled upon me.

"You have been so very ill," said one, "we feared that your body would not endure."

The other, whom I knew well in spite of the exalted position he had had on Earth, took my hands between his.

"You have suffered too much, Lobsang. The world has been too cruel to you. We have discussed this and feel that you may like to withdraw. There would be very much more suffering for you if you continued. You can abandon your body now and remain here through eternity. Would you prefer it so?"

My heart leaped within me. Peace after all my sufferings. Sufferings which, but for my hard and special training, would have ended my life years ago. Special training. Yes, for what? So that I could see the aura of people, so that I could influence thought in the direction of auric research.

And if I gave up, who would continue that task? "The world has been too cruel to you. No blame will attach to you if you give up." I must think carefully here. No blame from others, but throughout eternity I would have to live with my conscience. What was life? Just a few years of misery. A few more years of hardship, suffering, misunderstanding, then, provided I had done all I could, my conscience would be at peace. For eternity.

"Honored Sir," I replied, "you have given me my choice. I will serve as long as my body will hold together. It is very shaky at this moment," I added. Happy smiles of approval broke out among the assembled men. Sha-lu purred loudly and gave me a gentle, playful bite of love.

"Your Earth body, as you say, is in a deplorable condition through hardship," said the Eminent Man. "Before you make a final decision, we must tell you this. We have located a body in the land of England, the owner of which is most anxious to leave. His aura has a fundamental harmonic of yours. Later, if conditions necessitate it, you can take over his body."

I nearly fell out of bed in horror. Me take over another body? My Guide laughed, "Now Lobsang, where is all your training? It is merely like taking over the robe of another. And at the passing of seven years the body would be

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yours, molecule for molecule yours, with the self same scars to which you are so attached. At first it would be a little strange, as when you first wore Western clothes. I well remember that, Lobsang.”

The Eminent Man broke in again, “You have your choice, my Lobsang. You can with a clear conscience relinquish your body now and remain here. But if you return to Earth, the time of the changing of bodies is not yet. Before you decide, I will tell you that if you return, you will return to hardship, misunderstanding, disbelief, and actual hatred, for there is a force of evil which tries to prevent all that is good in connection with human evolution. You will have evil forces with which to contend.”

“My mind is made up,” I replied. “You have given me my choice. I will continue until my task is done, and if I have to take over another body, well, so be it.” Heavy drowsiness assailed me. My eyes closed in spite of my efforts. The scene faded and I lapsed into unconsciousness.

The world seemed to be spinning round. There was a roaring in my ears, and a babble of voices. In some way that I could not explain, I seemed to be tied up. Was I in prison again? Had the Japanese caught me? Was my journey across Russia a dream, had I really been to the “Land of the Golden Light”?

“He is coming to,” said a rough voice. “Hey! WAKE UP!” yelled someone in my ear. Drowsily I opened my aching eyes. A scowling Russian-woman stared into my face. Beside her a fat woman doctor glanced stonily around the ward. Ward? I was in a ward with perhaps forty or fifty other men. Then the pain came on. My whole body came alive with flaming pain. Breathing was difficult. I could not move.

“Aw, he’ll do,” said the stony-faced doctor as she and the nurse turned and walked away. I lay panting, breath coming in short gasps because of the pain in my left side. No pain-relieving drugs here. Here one lived or died on one’s own, neither expecting nor getting sympathy or relief from agony.

Heavy nurses stomped by, shaking the bed with the weight of their tread. Every morning callous fingers tore off the dressings and replaced them by others. For one’s other needs, one had to depend on the good offices of those patients who were ambulant, and willing.

For two weeks I lay there, almost neglected by the nurses and medical staff, getting what help I could from other patients, and suffering agonies when they could not or would not attend to my needs. At the end of two weeks the stony-faced woman doctor came, accompanied by the heavyweight nurse. Roughly they tore the plaster off my left arm and left leg. I had never seen any patient treated like this before, and when I showed signs of falling, the stalwart

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nurse supported me by my damaged left arm.

During the next week I hobbled round, helping patients as best I could. All I had to wear was a blanket, and I was wondering how I would get clothing. On the twenty-second day of my stay in the hospital two policemen came to the ward. Ripping off my blanket, they shoved a suit of clothes at me, and shouted, "Hurry, you are being deported. You should have left three weeks ago."

"But how could I leave when I was unconscious through no fault of mine?" I argued. A blow across the face was the only answer. The second policeman loosened his revolver in its holster suggestively. They hustled me down the stairs and into the office of the Political Commissar.

"You did not tell us, when you were admitted, that you were being deported," he said angrily. "You have had treatment under false pretences and now you must pay for it."

"Comrade Commissar," I replied, "I was brought here unconscious, and my injuries were caused by the bad driving of a Russian soldier. I have suffered much pain and loss through this."

The Commissar thoughtfully stroked his chin. "Hmm," he said, "how do you know all this if you were unconscious? I must look into the matter." He turned to the policeman and said, "Take him off and keep him in a cell in your police station until you hear from me."

Once again I was marched through crowded streets as an arrested man. At the police station my fingerprints were taken once more, and I was taken to a cell deep below the ground level. For a long time nothing happened, then a guard brought me cabbage soup, black bread and some very synthetic acorn coffee. The light in the corridor was kept on all the time, and there was no way of telling night from day, nor of marking the passing of the hours. Eventually I was taken to a room where a severe man shuffled his papers and peered at me over his glasses.

"You have been found guilty," he said, "of remaining in Russia after you had been sentenced to be deported. True, you were involved in an accident not of your making, but immediately you became conscious you should have drawn the attention of the Hospital Commissar to your position. In your treatment you have cost Russia much," he went on, "but Russia is merciful. You will work on the roads in Poland for twelve months to help pay for your treatment."

"But you should pay me," I answered hotly. "Through the fault of a Russian soldier I have been badly injured."

"The soldier is not here to defend himself He was uninjured, so we shot

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him. Your sentence stands. Tomorrow you will be taken to Poland where you will work on the roads." A guard roughly grabbed my arm, and led me off to the cell again.

The next day I and two other men were taken from our cells and marched off to the railway station. For some time, in company with the police, we stood around. Then a platoon of soldiers appeared, and the policeman in charge of us went to the Sergeant in charge of the soldiers and presented a form to be signed. Once again we were in the custody of the Russian army!

Another long wait, and at long last we were marched off to a train which would eventually take us to Lwow in Poland.

Lwow was a drab place. The countryside was dotted with oil wells, the roads were terrible because of the heavy war traffic. Men and women worked on the roads, breaking stones, filling in holes, and trying to keep body and soul together on a starvation diet. The two men who had traveled from Kiev with me were very dissimilar. Jakob was a nasty-minded man who rushed to the guards with any tale he could trump up. Jozef was different altogether and could be relied upon to "pull his weight". Because my legs were bad and made it difficult for me to stand for long, I was given the job of sitting by the side of the road breaking stones.

Apparently it was not considered that my damaged left arm and barely healed ribs and lungs were any drawback. For a month I stuck at it, slaving away for my food only. Even the women who worked were paid two zloty for each cubic yard of stone they broke. At the end of the month I collapsed, coughing blood. Jozef came to my aid as I lay by the roadside, ignoring the command of the guards. One of the soldiers raised his rifle and shot Jozef through the neck fortunately missing any vital part. We lay by the side of the road together until a farmer came by in his horse-drawn cart. A guard stopped him and we were tumbled roughly on top of his load of flax. The guard jumped up beside him, and we trundled off to the prison hospital. For weeks I lay on the wooden planks that served as my bed, then the prison doctor said that I would have to be moved out. I was dying, he said, and he would get into trouble if any more prisoners died that month; he had exceeded his quota!

There was an unusual consultation in my hospital cell. The prison Governor, the doctor, and a senior guard. "You will have to go to Stryj," said the Governor.

"Things are not so strict, and the country is healthier."

"But Governor," I replied, "why should I move? I am in prison for no offence, for I have done no wrong at all. Why should I move and keep quiet

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about it? I will tell everyone I meet how it was arranged.”

There was much shouting, much bickering, and at last, I, the prisoner, came up with a solution. “Governor,” I said, “you want me out to save yourselves. I will not be shunted to another prison and keep quiet. If you want me to remain silent, let Jozef Kochino and I go to Stryj as free men. Give us clothes that we may be decent. Give us a little money that we may buy food. We will remain silent and will go right away over the Carpathians”

The Governor grumbled and swore, and all the men rushed out of my cell. The next day the Governor came back and said that he had read my papers and saw that I was “a man of honor”, as he put it, who had been jailed unjustly. He would do as I said.

For a week nothing happened, nothing more was said. At three o’clock on the morning of the eighth day a guard came into my cell, roughly awakened me, and told me I was wanted at “The Office”. Quickly I dressed and followed the guard to the office. He opened the door and pushed me inside. A guard was sitting inside with two piles of clothing and two Russian Army packs. Food was on a table. He motioned me to be silent and come to him.

“You are being taken to Stryj,” he whispered. “When you get there ask the guard—there will be one only—to drive you a little farther. If you can get him on a quiet road, overpower him, tie him up and leave him by the side of the road. You have helped me with my illness, so I will tell you that there is a plot to shoot you as escapees.”

The door opened and Jozef came in. “Now eat your breakfast,” said the guard, “and hurry up. Here is a sum of money to help you on your way.” Quite a large sum it was, too. I could see the plot. The Prison Governor was going to say that we had robbed him and escaped.

With breakfast inside us, we went out to a car, a four-wheel-drive jeep type. A surly police driver sat at the wheel, revolver on the seat beside him. Curtly motioning to us to get in, he let in the clutch and shot out of the open gate. Thirty-five miles on our way—five miles from Stryj—I thought it was time to act. Quickly I reached over and did a little Judo push under the guard’s nose, with the other hand taking the steering wheel. The guard toppled, foot hard on the accelerator. Hastily I switched off and steered the car to the side of the road. Jozef was watching open-mouthed. Hastily I told him of the plot.

“Quick, Jozef,” I said. “Off with your clothes and put on his. You will have to be the guard.”

“But Lobsang,” wailed Jozef, “I cannot drive, and you do not look like a

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Russian.”

We pushed the guard out of the way and I got into the driver’s seat, started the engine, and drove on until we reached a rutted lane. We drove along a little way and stopped. The guard was stirring now so we propped him up. I held the gun at his side.

“Guard,” I exclaimed as fiercely as I could manage, “if you value your life you will do as I say. You will drive us around the outskirts of Stryj and on to Skolye. There we will let you go.”

“I will do anything you say,” whimpered the guard, but if you are going to cross the Border, let me cross with you, or I shall be shot.”

Jozef sat in the back of the jeep, carefully nursing the gun and looking with considerable longing at the back of the guard’s neck. I sat by the driver, in case he should try any tricks such as running off the road, or throwing away the ignition key. We sped along, avoiding the main roads.

The countryside became more hilly as we moved up into the Carpathian Mountains. The trees became denser, providing better hiding places. At a suitable spot we stopped to stretch our legs and have some food, sharing what we had with the guard. At Vel’ke-Berezni, almost out of petrol, we stopped and hid the jeep. With the guard between us we moved stealthily along. This was Border country, and we had to be careful. Anyone who has sufficient reason can cross the border of any country. It merely calls for a little ingenuity and enterprise. I have never had the slightest real trouble in crossing a frontier illegally. My only difficulties have been when I had a perfectly legitimate passport.

Passports merely inconvenience the innocent traveler, causing him to be subjected to ridiculous red tape. Lack of a passport has never hindered a person who had to cross frontiers. However, presumably there have to be passports in order to harass harmless travelers and give work to hordes of often very unpleasant officials. This is not a treatise on how to cross frontiers illegally, so I will just say that without difficulty the three of us entered Czechoslovakia. The guard went his way, and we went ours.

“My home is at Levice,” said Jozef, “I want to go home. You can stay with me as long as you like.”

Together we made our way to Kosice, Zvolen, and on to Levice, walking, getting lifts, and riding on trains. Jozef knew the country well, knew where to get potatoes or beets or anything which could be eaten.

At long last, we walked up a mean street in Levice to a small house. Jozef knocked, and as there was no reply, knocked again. With extreme caution, a

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curtain was drawn aside an inch or so. The watcher saw and recognized Jozef. The door was flung open and he was dragged inside. The door slammed in my face. I paced up and down outside. Eventually the door opened again and Jozef came out looking more troubled than I had thought possible.

"My mother won't have you in," he said. "She says there are too many spies about and if we have anyone else in, we may all get arrested. I'm sorry." With that he turned shamefacedly away and reentered the house.

For long moments I stood dazed. I had been responsible for getting Jozef out of prison, I had saved him from getting shot. My efforts had brought him here, and now he had turned and left me to manage the best way I could. Sadly I turned and retraced my way down the street and on the long road again.

No money, no food, no understanding of the language. I marched on blindly, saddened at the treachery of one I had called "friend".

For hour after hour I plodded along by the side of the highway. The few passing cars gave me not a glance, there were too many people on the march for me to attract attention. A few miles back I had assuaged my hunger somewhat by picking up some half rotten potatoes which a farmer had put out for his pigs. Drink was never a problem, for there were always the streams. Long ago I had learned that streams and brooks were safe, but rivers were polluted.

Far ahead of me on the straight road I saw a bulky object. In the distance it appeared to be a police truck, or road blockage. For several minutes I sat by the side of the road watching. There was no sign of police or soldiers, so I resumed my journey, being very cautious about it. As I drew near I saw that a man was trying to do something to the engine. He looked up at my approach and said something which I did not understand. He repeated it in another language, and then in another. At last I could roughly understand what he was saying. The engine had stopped and he could not make it go, did I know about motors? I looked, and fiddled about, looked at the points, and tried the starter. There was ample petrol. Looking under the dash at the wiring I saw where the insulation had worn away, cutting off the ignition when the car had hit a bump in the road and jolted two bare wires together. I had no insulating tape or tools, but it was merely the work of moments to wrap the wires in strips of cloth and tie them safely. The engine started and purred smoothly. "Something wrong here," I thought. "This engine goes too well to be an old farmer's car!"

The man was hopping up and down with joy. "Brava brava," he kept exclaiming. "You have saved me!"

I looked at him in some puzzlement, how had I "saved him" by starting his car? He looked me over carefully.

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"I have seen you before," he said. "You were with another man, and you were crossing the River Hron Bridge at Levice."

"Yes," I replied, "and now I am on my way alone."

He motioned me to get into the car. As he drove along I told him all that had happened. By his aura I could see that he was a trustworthy and well-intentioned man.

"The war ended my profession," he said, "and I have to live and support my family. You are good with cars and I can use a driver who will not get stuck on the road. We take foodstuffs and a few luxury articles from one country to another. All you have to do is to drive and maintain a car."

I looked very dubious. Smuggling? I had never done it in my life. The man looked at me and said, "No drugs, no weapons, nothing harmful. Food to keep people alive, and a few luxury articles for women to keep them happy."

It seemed peculiar to me. Czechoslovakia did not appear to be a country which could afford to export food and luxury goods. I said so, and the man replied, "You are perfectly correct, it all comes from another country, we merely forward it on. The Russians steal from the Occupied peoples, taking all their possessions. They put all the valuable goods on trains and send back loads of stuff to high party leaders. We merely intercept those trains which have the most good food which we can direct to other countries who are in need. All the Frontier Guards are in it. You would merely have to drive, with me beside you."

"Well," I said, "show me in this truck. If there are no drugs, nothing harmful, I will drive you to wherever you wish."

He laughed and said, "Come on in the back. Look as much as you want. My regular driver is ill, and I thought I could manage this car myself. I cannot for I know nothing of mechanical things. I was a well-known lawyer in Vienna before the war put me out of work."

I rummaged, and turned out the back. As he said, there was only food and a few silk things which women wear.

"I am satisfied," I said. "I will drive you."

He motioned me to the driver's seat, and we were off on a journey which took me through Bratislava, into Austria, through Vienna and Klagenfurt, and eventually into Italy, where the journey ended at Verona. Frontier Guards stopped us, made a show of inspecting the goods, then waved us on when a little package was placed in their hands. Once a police car raced ahead of us, stopped suddenly, and caused me to really stand on the brakes. Two police-

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men dashed at us with drawn revolvers. Then, on production of certain papers, they backed away, looking very embarrassed and muttering profuse apologies. My new employer seemed to be very pleased with me. "I can put you in touch with a man who runs trucks to Lausanne, in Switzerland," he said, "and if he is as satisfied as I am, he can pass you on to someone who will get you to Ludwigshafen in Germany."

For a week we lazed in Venice while our cargo was being unloaded and other goods put aboard. We also wanted a rest after the exhausting drive. Venice was a terrible place for me; I found it difficult to breathe in that lowland. It appeared to me that the place was merely an open sewer.

From Venice, in a different truck, we went on to Padua, Vicenza, and Verona. Among all the officials we were treated as public benefactors, and I wondered who my employer really was. From his aura, and the aura cannot lie, it was obvious that he was a good man. I made no enquiries, as I was not really interested. All I wanted was to get going, to get on with my own task in life. As I knew, my task could not start until I could settle down, free from all this jumping from country to country.

My employer walked into my room in the Verona hotel.

"I have a man I want you to meet. He is coming here this afternoon. Ah, Lobsang, you would do better if you shaved off your beard. Americans seem to dislike beards, and this man is an American who reconditions trucks and cars and moves them from country to country. How about it?"

"Sir," I replied, "if the Americans or anyone else dislike my beard, they will have to go on disliking. My jaw bones were shattered by Japanese boots, and I wear a beard to disguise my injuries."

My employer talked with me for quite a time and before we parted he gave me a very satisfactory sum of money, saying that I had kept my part of the bargain, he would keep his.

The American was a flashy individual, rolling a huge cigar between his thick lips. His teeth were liberally studded with gold fillings, and his clothes really dazzled with their gaudiness. Dancing attendance upon him was a very artificially-blonde woman whose clothing scarce concealed those portions of her anatomy which Western convention decreed should be covered.

"Sa-ay," she squealed as she looked at me. "Isn't he cute? Isn't he a doll?"

"Aw shut it, Baby," said the man who provided her income. "Scram, go take a walk. We got business." With a pout and a jiggle that shook everything dangerously, and placed a heavy strain on flimsy fabric, "Baby" flounced out

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of the room in search of drinks.

“We gotta get a swell Mercedes out,” said the American. “No sale for it here, it will fetch plenty money in another country. It used to belong to one of Musso’s Big Shots. We liberated it and painted it over. I got a dandy contact in Karlsruhe, in Germany, if I can get it there, I stand to make a packet.”

“Why do you not drive it yourself?” I asked. “I do not know Switzerland or Germany.”

“Gee, me drive it? I have done it too often, all the Frontier Guards know me.”

“So you want me to get caught?” I replied. “I have come too far too dangerously to get stopped now. No, I do not want this job.”

“Aw, man! It’s a cinch for you, you look honest and I can provide papers saying that it is your car and you are a tourist. Sure I can give you all the papers.” He fished in a large brief case which he was carrying, and shoved a whole sheaf of papers and forms at me. Idly I glanced at them. Ship’s engineer! I saw that they referred to a man, a ship’s engineer. His union card and all were there. Ship’s engineer!

If I could get those papers I could get aboard a ship. I had studied engineering as well as medicine and surgery in Chungking; I had a B.Sc. in engineering, I was a fully qualified pilot . . . my mind raced on.

“Well, I am not keen on it.” I said. “Too risky. These papers do not have my photograph on them. How do I know that the real owner will not turn up at the wrong moment?”

“The guy is dead, dead and buried. He got drunk and he was driving a Fiat at speed. Guess he fell asleep; anyhow he spattered himself along the side of a concrete bridge. We heard about him and picked up his papers.”

“And if I agree, what will you pay me, and can I keep these papers? They will help me across the Atlantic.”

“Sure, Bud, sure. I give you two-fifty bucks and all expenses, and you keep all the papers. We will get your photograph put on them instead of his. I got contacts. I fix it real good!”

“Very well,” I replied, “I will drive the car to Karlsruhe for you.”

“Take the girl along with you, she will be company and it will get her out of my hair. I gotta fresh one lined up.”

For some moments I looked at him in a daze. He evidently mistook my

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expression. "Aw, sure, She's game for anything. You'll have plenty of fun."

"No!" I exclaimed, "I will not take that woman with me. I would not stay in the same car with her. If you distrust me, let us call it off, or you can send a man, or two men, but no woman."

He leaned back in his chair and roared, opening his mouth wide; the display of gold reminded me of the Golden Objects on display in Temples of Tibet. His cigar fell to the floor and became extinguished in a shower of sparks. "That dame," he said when he could finally speak, "she costs me five hundred bucks a week. I offer to give her to you for the trip and you refuse. Well, ain't that sump'n!"

Two days later the papers were ready. My photograph had been fixed on, and friendly officials had carefully examined the papers and covered them with official seals as necessary. The great Mercedes was gleaming in the Italian sunlight. I checked, as always, the fuel, oil and water, got in and started the engine. As I drove off the American gave me a friendly wave.

At the Swiss border, the officials very carefully inspected the papers which I presented. Then they turned their attention to the car. A probe into the fuel tank to make sure there was no false compartment, tapping along the body to make sure that nothing was hidden behind the metal panels. Two guards looked underneath, under the dash, and even looked at the engine. As they gave me clearance and I moved off, shouts broke out behind me. Quickly I braked. A guard ran up, panting. "Will you take a man to Martigny?" he asked. "He is in rather a hurry and has to go on a matter of some urgency."

"Yes," I replied, "I will take him if he is ready now."

The guard beckoned, and a man hurried out of the Frontier offices. Bowing to me, he got into the car and sat beside me. By his aura I saw that he was an official and was suspicious. Apparently he was wondering why I should be driving alone, with no woman friends.

He was a great talker, but he left time enough to ply me with questions. Questions which I could answer. "No women, Sir?" he said, "but how unusual. Perhaps you have other interests?"

I laughed and said, "You people think only of sex, you think that a man traveling alone is a freak, someone of whom you must be suspicious. I am a tourist, I am seeing the sights. I can see women anywhere."

He looked at me with some understanding in his eyes, and I said, "I will tell you a story which I know is true. It is another version of the Garden of Eden."

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“Throughout history in all the great religious works of the world there have been stories which some have believed, but which others, with perhaps greater insight, have regarded as legends, as legends designed to conceal certain knowledge which should not fall before any chance person because such knowledge can be dangerous in such hands.

“Such is the story or legend of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, wherein Eve was tempted by a serpent and in which she ate the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, and having been tempted by the serpent, and having eaten of the Tree of Knowledge, they gazed upon each other and saw that they were naked. Having obtained this forbidden knowledge, they were no longer allowed to remain in the Garden of Eden.

“The Garden of Eden, of course, is that blissful land of ignorance in which one fears nothing because one understands nothing, in which one is, to all intents and purposes, a cabbage. But here, then, is the more esoteric version of the story.

“Man and woman are not just merely a mass of protoplasm, of flesh stuck upon a bony framework. Man is, or can be, a much greater thing than that. Here on this Earth we are mere puppets of our Overself, that Overself which temporarily resides in the astral and which obtains experience through the flesh body which is the puppet, the instrument of the astral.

“Physiologists and others have dissected man’s body, and they have reduced everything to a mass of flesh and bone. They can discuss this bone or that bone, they can discuss various organs, but these are all material things. They have not discovered, nor have they tried to discover, the more secret things, the intangible things, things which the Indians, the Chinese, and the Tibetans knew centuries and centuries before Christianity.

“The spine is a very important structure indeed. It houses the spinal cord, without which one is paralyzed, without which one is useless as a human. But the spine is more important than that. Right in the center of the spinal nerve, the spinal cord, is a tube which extends to another dimension. It is a tube upon which the force known as the Kundalini can travel when awakened. At the base of the spine is what the Easterners call the Serpent Fire. It is the seat of Life itself.

“In the average Westerner this great force is dormant, asleep, almost paralyzed with disuse. Actually it is like a serpent coiled at the base of the spine, a serpent of immense power, but which, for various reasons, cannot escape from its confines for the time being. This mythical figure of a serpent is known as the Kundalini, and in awakened Easterners the serpent force can

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arise through the channel in the spinal nerve, rise straight up to the brain and beyond, beyond into the astral. As it rises its potent force activates each of the chakrams, or centers of power, such as the umbilicus, throat, and various other parts. When those centers are awakened a person becomes vital, powerful, dominant.

“With complete control of the serpent force one can achieve almost anything. One can move mountains, or walk on water, or levitate, or allow oneself to be buried in the earth in a sealed chamber from which one would emerge alive at any specified time.

“So we have it in the legend that Eve was tempted by a serpent. In other words, in some way Eve got to know about the Kundalini. She was able to release the serpent power coiled at the base of her spine and that rose up and surged through the spinal column, and awakened her brain and gave her knowledge. Thus in the story it can be said that she ate of the Tree of Knowledge, or of the fruit thereof. She had this knowledge and with it she could see the aura, the force around the human body. She could see the aura of Adam, his thoughts and intentions, and Adam, too, being tempted by Eve, had his Kundalini awakened and then he could see Eve as she was.

“The truth is that each gazed upon the aura of the other, seeing the other’s naked astral form, the form unclothed by the human body, and so could see all the other’s thoughts, all his desires, all his knowledge, and that should not be at the stage of evolution of Adam and Eve.

“Old priests knew that under certain conditions the aura could be seen, they knew that the Kundalini could be awakened by sex. So in the old days priests taught that sex was sinful, that sex was the root of all evil, and because Eve tempted Adam, sex was the downfall of the world. They taught this because sometimes, as I have said, sex can stir the Kundalini which rests dormant in most people at the base of the spine.

“The Kundalini force is coiled down low, a terrific force, like a clock spring the way it is coiled. Like a clock spring suddenly uncoiled it can do damage. This particular force is located at the base of the spine, part of it actually within the generative organs. People of the East recognize this; certain of the Hindus use sex in their religious ceremonies. They use a different form of sex manifestation, and a different sex position to achieve specified results, and they do achieve those results. The ancients, centuries and centuries ago, worshipped sex. They went in for phallic worship. There were certain ceremonies in temples which raised the Kundalini which gave one clairvoyance, telepathy, and many other esoteric powers.

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“Sex used properly and in a certain way in love can raise one’s vibrations. It can cause what the Easterners call the Flower of the Lotus to open, and to embrace the world of the spirit. It can cause the Kundalini to surge and to awaken certain centers. But sex and the Kundalini should never be abused. One should complement and supplement the other. Those religions which say that there should be no sex between husband and wife are tragically wrong. This is often advocated by many of the more dubious cults of Christianity. The Roman Catholics come nearer to the truth when they advise husband and wife to have sexual experiences, but the Catholics advocate it blindly, not knowing why and believing that it is merely for the procreation of children, which is not the main purpose of sex, although most people believe it is.

“These religions, then, which say that one should have no sexual experiences are trying to stifle individual evolution and the evolution of the race. This is how it works: In magnetism one obtains a powerful magnet by arranging the molecules of the substance to face in one direction. Normally in a piece of iron, for example, all the molecules are in any direction like an undisciplined crowd. They are haphazardly arranged, but when a certain force is applied (in the case of iron, a magnetizing force) all the molecules face in one direction, and so one has the great power of magnetism without which there would be no radio or electricity, without which there would be no road or rail transport, or air travel either.

“In the human, when the Kundalini is awakened, when the Serpent Fire becomes alive, then the molecules in the body all face in one direction because the Kundalini force, in awakening, has pulled the molecules in that direction. Then the human body becomes vibrant with life and health, it becomes powerful in knowledge, it can see all.

“There are various methods of awakening the Kundalini completely, but this should not be done except with those who are suitably evolved because of the immense power and domination of others which a complete awakening would give, and power can be abused and used for ill. But the Kundalini can be partly awakened, and can vivify certain centers by love between a married couple.

With the true ecstasy of intimacy the molecules of the body become so arranged that many of them face in one direction, and so these people become people of great dynamic power.

“When all the false modesty and all the false teachings about sex are removed, then once again will Man arise as a great being, once again will Man be able to take his place as a traveler to the stars.”

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CHAPTER FIVE

The car droned on, surging with power that no mountain-road could overwhelm while the American sat reflectively beside me, only occasionally speaking to point out landmarks of surpassing beauty. We approached the environs of Martigny and he spoke. "As an astute man like you will have guessed I am a Government official. Will you give me the pleasure of your company at dinner?"

"I should be delighted, sir," I replied. "I had intended to drive on to Aigle before stopping, but I will stay at this town instead."

We drove on, he directing me, until we arrived at a most excellent hotel. My luggage was carried in, I drove the car round to the garage and gave instructions for servicing.

Dinner was a most enjoyable meal, my ex-passenger, now host, was an interesting conversationalist, now that he had overcome his initial suspicion of me. On the old Tibetan principle that "He who listens most learns most," I let him do all the talking. He discussed Customs cases, and told me of a recent case where an expensive car had false panels behind which were stored narcotics.

"I am an ordinary tourist," I said, "and one of the major dislikes in my life is drugs. Will you have my car examined to see if any false panels are in it? You have just told me of a case where they were installed without the owner's knowledge." At my insistence, the car was driven to the local Police headquarters and left overnight for them to examine.

In the morning I was greeted as an old and trusted friend. They had examined every inch of the car and had found it to be innocent. The Swiss Police, I found, were courteous and affable, and very ready to assist a tourist.

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I drove on, alone with my thoughts, wondering what the future had in store for me. More trouble and hardship, that I knew, for all the Seers had simply drummed that into me! Behind me in the luggage compartment I had the luggage of a man whose papers I had taken over. He had no known relatives, like me he seemed to have been alone in the world. In his—or mine, now—cases he had a few books on marine engineering. I stopped the car, and took out the Manual. As I drove I recited to myself various rules which, as a Ship's Engineer, I should have to know. I planned to get a ship of a different Line; the Discharge Book would show me which Lines to avoid for fear of being recognized.

The miles reeled out beneath me. Aigle, Lausanne, and across the frontier into Germany. The German Frontier Guards were very thorough, checking everything, even engine and tire numbers. They were also completely humorless and dour.

On and on I drove. At Karlsruhe I went to the address which I had been given and was told that the man whom I was to see was at Ludwigshafen. So on I drove to Ludwigshafen and there, at the best hotel, I found the American.

"Aw, Gee Bud," he said, "I could not take that auto over the mountain roads, my nerves are bad. Too much booze, I guess." I "guessed" so, too. His room at the hotel was like a remarkably well-equipped bar, complete with barmaid! This one had more to show, and showed more, than the one he had left in Italy. She had just three thoughts in her head, German marks, drink, and sex, in that order.

The American was very pleased with the condition of the car, not a scratch and spotlessly clean. He marked his appreciation by a substantial gift of American dollars.

For three months I worked for him, driving immense trucks to various cities and bringing back cars which had to be reconditioned or rebuilt. I did not know what it was all about, I still do not, but I was well paid, and I was having time to study my marine engineering books. In the various cities I visited the local museums and carefully examined all the ship models, and models of ship engines.

Three months later the American came to the poor little room I had rented, and flopped down on my bed, reeking cigar fairly stinking out the place. "Gee, Bud," he said. "You sure don't go in for luxury! A U.S. prison cell is more comfortable than this. I gotta job for you, a big job. Want it?"

"If it will get me nearer the sea, to Le Havre or Cherbourg," I said.

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“Well, this will take you to Verdun and it is quite legitimate. I gotta rig with more wheels than a caterpillar has legs. It’s a crazy thing to drive. There’s a lot of dollars in it.”

“Tell me more about it,” I answered. “I told you I could drive anything. Have you got clearance papers for it to enter France?”

“Yep,” he said. “Been waiting three months to get them. We have been keeping you on ice and letting you earn some pocket money. Guess I never thought you were living in a dump like this, though.”

He got up and motioned for me to follow him out. At the door he had his car, complete with girlfriend. “You drive,” he said, getting in the back with the woman. “I will direct you.” At what appeared to be an abandoned airfield outside Ludwigshafen we stopped. There, in a huge shed, was the weirdest machine that I had ever seen. It seemed to be mainly yellow girders supported on a whole series of eight-foot wheels. Ridiculously high off the ground was a small glassed-in enclosure. Fixed on the back of the contraption were a whole series of lattice girders, and an immense steel scoop. Gingerly I climbed up to the seat.

“Sa-ay,” yelled the American, “Don’t you want the handbook?” He reached up, and passed me a Manual dealing with these contraptions. “I had a guy,” he said, “who was delivering a street sweeping truck, a new one. He would not read the book and when he got to his destination he found that he had had the brushes sweeping all the time and he had worn them out. I don’t want you wrecking the road from here to Verdun,”

Fingering through the book I soon had the engine running. It made a roar like a plane taking off. Gingerly I let in the clutch and the mammoth machine lumbered out of the shed and on to what had once been a runway.

I drove up and down a few times to become accustomed to the machine’s controls, and as I turned to go back to the shed a German Police car drove up. A policeman got out, a savage looking fellow who appeared as if he had just shed the Gestapo badge. “You are driving that without an attendant,” he barked.

“Attendant?” I thought, “Does he think I need a keeper?” I drove up alongside him.

“Well, what is the trouble with you?” I shouted. “This is private property. Get off!” To my utter surprise he did! He got in his car and just drove outside the grounds.

The American walked over to him. “What’s biting you, Bud?” he said.

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"I have come to tell you that that machine can only be driven on the roads when accompanied by an attendant on the back to watch for overtaking traffic. It can only be driven at night, unless you have a police car at front and rear." For a moment I thought he was going to say "Heil, Hitler." Then he turned, got in his car and drove off.

"Gee," said the American. "That sure beats cockfighting. It sure do! I got a German named Ludvig who . . ."

"Not for me," I exclaimed fervently. "Not a German, they are too stodgy for me."

"Okay, Bud, okay. So no Kraut. Take it easy, don't get riled up. I got a Franchie who you'll like. Marcel. C'mon. We will go see him." I parked the machine in the shed, looked over it to see that everything was shut off, and sauntered out, locking the door. "Don't you ever get rattled?" said the American. "Guess you better drive us."

Marcel had to be fished out of a bar. At first sight of him I thought his face had been stepped on by a horse. A second glance convinced me that his face would have been better if he had been stepped on by a horse. Marcel was ugly. Painfully ugly, but there was something about him which made me like him on sight. For some time we sat in the car discussing terms, then I returned to the machine to drive it and so become accustomed to it. As I lumbered round the track I saw a battered old car drive up. Marcel jumped out, waving frantically. I eased the machine to a standstill beside him. "I've got it, I've got it," he cried, all excitement. With much gesticulation he turned to his car, and nearly brained himself on the low-roofed door. Rubbing his head, and muttering fear-some imprecations against the makers of small cars, he rummaged on the back seat and came out with a large parcel.

"Intercom," he shouted. He always shouted, even when standing just a few inches from one. "Intercom, we talk, yes? You there, me here, wire between, we talk all time. Good?"

Shouting away at the top of his voice, he jumped on to the Earthmover, trailing wires and bits all over the place.

"You want headset, no?" he yelled. "You hear me so much better. Me. I have mike."

From the uproar he was making, I came to the conclusion that no intercom was necessary. His voice carried well above the throbbing of the mighty engine.

I drove along again, practicing turns, getting used to the thing. Marcel

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pranced and chattered from front to rear of the machine, twisting the wires around the girders. Coming to my "conning tower" he thrust an arm through the open window, thumped me on the shoulder, and bellowed, "The headset, you put her on, yes? You hear so good. Wait, I go back!" He scuttled along the girders, plonked into his seat at the far end of the machine, and shrieked into the microphone. "You hear good? Yes? I come!" In his exuberance he had forgotten that I too had a microphone.

Almost before I could collect my wits he was back, hammering at the window, "Good? Good? You hear good?"

"Say," said the American. "You guys take off tonight. All the papers are here. Marcel knows how to get you to Paris, with the chance of earning francs on the way. Sure been nice knowing you." The American walked away, out of my life.

Perhaps he will read this and get in touch with me through the publishers. I went off to my solitary room. Marcel went off to the local place of refreshment. For the rest of the day I slept.

With the coming of darkness I had a meal and took a cab out to the shed. My luggage, now reduced to a bare minimum, I stowed in the space behind my seat. Engine started, pressures satisfactory. Fuel gauge reading Full. Lights working normally. I trundled the machine out in the open and drove around the track to warm it up. The moon rose higher and higher. No sign of Marcel. With the engine off I got out and walked around. At long last a car drove into the grounds, and Marcel got out. "Party," he roared. "Farewell party. We go now, yes?"

Disgustedly I restarted the engine, switched on the powerful lights, and rolled out into the road. Marcel was yelling so much that I just put the earphones around my neck and forgot all about him. Miles farther on a German police car pulled to a halt in front of me. "Your lookout is asleep. You are breaking Regulations by driving without a man keeping watch behind."

Marcel came bounding up, "Me? Asleep? You do not see straight, Policeman. Because I sit in comfort you become officious." The policeman came closer and smelled my breath carefully. "No, he is a saint," said Marcel. "He does not take drink. Nor women," he added as an afterthought.

"Your papers!" said the policeman. Carefully he examined them, looking for any excuse to make trouble. Then he saw my American Ships' Engineer papers. "So. You are an American? Well, we want no trouble with your Consul. On your way."

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Pushing back the papers as if they were contaminated with the plague, he hurried back to his car and sped away. Telling Marcel what I thought of him, I sent him back to his seat, and we drove on through the night. At twenty miles an hour, the speed at which we were instructed to travel, the seventy miles to the French border seemed endless. Just short of Saarhrucken we stopped, pulled off the road so as not to impede traffic, and prepared to spend the day. After a meal I took our papers and went to the local police station in order to obtain clearance across the border. With a police motor cyclist at front and rear, we crept along side roads until we reached the Customs post.

Marcel was in his element talking to his French compatriots. I gathered that he and one of the Customs men whom he had met in "the Resistance" had, almost alone, won the war! With our papers checked, we were allowed to move into French territory. The friendly Customs man took Marcel off for the day, and I curled up beside the girders of the machine and went to sleep.

Very, very late indeed Marcel returned in charge of two French policemen. With a wink at me, they strapped him in his seat, dead to the world, and cheerily waved me on my way. I roared on into the darkness, a mighty machine beneath me, a drunken "lookout" behind me. The whole time I kept careful watch for any prowling police cars. One came whizzing up, a policeman leaned out of his window, made a derisory gesture towards Marcel, waved his hand in greeting, and whizzed on. With Metz well behind me, and no sign of life from Marcel, I pulled into the side of the road, got out and walked behind to look at him. He was fast asleep. No amount of shaking would rouse him, so I drove on again.

As dawn was breaking I drove through the streets of Verdun, on, and into the large car park which was my destination.

"Lobsang", called a sleepy voice from the back. "If you don't get started we shall be late."

"Late?" I said. "We are at Verdun."

There was a dead silence. Then an explosive "Verdun?"

"Listen, Marcel," I said. "You were brought to me drunk and incapable. You were strapped in your seat. I had to do all the work, I had to find my way. Now you get going and bring me breakfast. Get moving." A very chastened Marcel tottered off down the street to eventually return with breakfast.

Five hours later a short swarthy man drove up in an old Renault. Not a word to us, he walked round the Earthmover, carefully inspecting it, looking for scratches, looking for anything at which to complain. His thick eyebrows

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met like a bar across the bridge of his nose, a nose which had been broken at some time and badly set. At last he came up to us. "Which of you is the driver?"

"I am," I said.

"You will take this back to Metz," he said.

"No," was my answer, "I have been paid to bring it here. All the papers are made out for here. I have finished with it."

His face flushed with rage, and to my consternation he drew from his pocket a spring-loaded knife. I was easily able to disarm him, the knife flew over my shoulder, and the swarthy man was flat on his back. To my surprise, as I looked around, I saw that quite a crowd of workmen had arrived.

"He's thrown the Boss," said one; "He must have been taken by surprise," muttered another. Violently the swarthy man erupted from the ground, like a rubber ball bouncing. Dashing into the workshop he picked up a steel bar with a claw on the end, a bar used for opening packing cases. Rushing out, yelling oaths, he swung at me, trying to rip my throat. I fell to my knees and grabbed his knees and pushed. He screamed horribly, and fell to the ground with his left leg broken. The steel bar left his nerveless hand, skidded along the ground, and clanged against metal somewhere.

"Well, Boss," I said, as I rose to my feet. "You are not Boss of me, eh? Now apologize nicely, or I will beat you up some more. You tried to murder me."

"Get a doctor, get a doctor," he groaned, "I'm dying."

"Apologize first," I said fiercely, "or you will want an undertaker."

"What's going on here? Eh? What is it?" Two French policemen pushed into the throng, looked at "the Boss" on the ground, and laughed uproariously. "Haw! Haw!" roared one. "So he has met a better man at last! This is worth all the trouble we have had with him." The policemen looked at me with respect, and then demanded to see my papers. Satisfied on that point, and having heard the reports of the bystanders, they turned and walked away.

The ex-Boss apologized, tears of mortification in his eyes, then I knelt beside him, set his leg, and fixed two boards from a packing case as a splint. Marcel had disappeared. He had run from trouble and out of my life. My two suitcases were heavy.

Taking them from the Earthmover, I walked out into the street on another stage of my journey. I had no job and knew no one. Marcel had proved to be a broken reed with his brains pickled in drink. Verdun did not attract me at

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all at that moment.

I stopped passerby after passerby for directions on how to get to the railway station so that I could leave my suitcases. Everyone seemed to think that I would be better off looking at the battlefields than looking for a station, but eventually I succeeded in obtaining the directions. Along the Rue Poincare I plodded, resting every so often and wondering what I could throw away to lighten my cases.

Books? No, I had to keep those very carefully. Merchant Navy uniforms? Definitely a "must." Reluctantly I came to the conclusion that I had only essentials with me. On to the Place Chevert I trudged. Turning right I arrived at the Quai de la Republique. Looking at the traffic on the River Meuse and wondering about ships I decided to sit a while and rest. A large Citroen slid silently along, slowed up, and finally stopped by me. A tall, dark-haired man looked at me for some moments and then got out. Walking towards me, he said, "You are the man who earned our gratitude by beating up The Boss."

"I am," I replied. "Does he want some more?"

The man laughed and answered, "For years he has terrorized the district, even the police were afraid of him. He did great things in the war, he says. Now, do you want a job?"

I looked the man over carefully before replying. "Yes I do," I answered, "if it is legitimate!"

"The job I have to offer is very legitimate." He paused and smiled at me. "You see, I know all about you. Marcel was instructed to bring you to me, but he ran away. I know of your Russian journey and of your travels since. Marcel delivered a letter from 'the American' about you and then ran off from me as he did from you." What a network, I thought. However, I consoled myself, these Europeans did things in a manner different from us of the East.

The man motioned to me. "Put your cases in the car and I will take you off to lunch so that we may talk." This was sense indeed. At least it would get those horrid cases off my hands for a time. Gladly I put them in the luggage compartment and then got into the seat beside him. He drove off to the best hotel, the du Coq Hardi, where he was very obviously well known. With many exclamations at my modest requirements in the refreshment line, he came to the point.

"There are two elderly ladies, one of eighty-four and the other of seventy-nine," he told me, looking carefully around. "They are most anxious to go to the son of one of them who is living in Paris. They, are afraid of bandits—old people have such fears, and they have been through two severe wars—and

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they want a capable man who is able to protect them. They can pay well."

Women? Old women? Better than young ones, I thought. But I still did not like the idea much. Then I considered my heavy cases. Considered how I was going to get to Paris. "They are generous old ladies," said the man. "There is only one drawback. You must not exceed thirty-five miles an hour."

Cautiously I glanced round the big room. Two old ladies! Sitting three tables away. "Holy Buddha's Tooth," I said to myself. "What have I come to?" A picture of those suitcases rose before my mind's eye. Heavy cases, cases that I could not lighten. Money, too, the more money I had the easier I would live in America while looking for a job. I sighed dolefully, and said, "They pay well, you said. And how about the car? I am not coming back this way."

"Yes, my friend, they pay exceedingly well. The Countess is a wealthy woman. The car? She is taking a new Fiat to her son as a gift. Come; meet them." He rose and led the way to the two old ladies. Bowing so low that I was reminded of a pilgrim in the Holy Way in Lhasa, he introduced me. The Countess looked at me haughtily through her lorgnette.

"So you consider yourself to be capable of driving us safely, my man?"

I looked at her equally haughtily and replied, "Madam, I am not 'your man'. As to the question of safety, my life is as valuable to me as yours evidently is to you. I have been asked to discuss this driving matter with you, but I confess that now I have my doubts."

For long moments she stared icily at me, then the stony rigidity of her jaws relaxed, and she broke into quite a girlish laugh. "Ah!" she exclaimed, "I do like a bit of spirit. It is so rare in these difficult days. When can we start?"

"We have not discussed terms yet, nor have I seen your car. When do you want to go, if I agree? And why do you want me to drive? Surely there are plenty of Frenchmen willing to drive?"

The terms she offered were generous, the reasons she gave were good. "I prefer a bold man, a man of spirit, one who has been places and seen life. When do we leave? As soon as you are ready."

Two days I gave them, then we started out in a deluxe Fiat. We cruised along the road to Reims, about eighty miles away, and there we spent the night. Dawdling along at thirty to thirty-five miles an hour gave me time to see the countryside and to collect my thoughts which had hardly time to catch up with my travels. On the following day we started at midday and arrived in Paris in time for tea. At her son's house in the suburbs I garaged the car, and started off again with my two suitcases. That night I slept in a cheap Paris lodging house.

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The next day I looked about for anything that would take me to Cherbourg or Le Havre.

Car dealers were my first choice; did anyone want a car delivered in Cherbourg or Le Havre? I trudged miles, from dealer to dealer. No, no one wanted my services. At the end of the day I went back to that cheap little lodging house and walked into a scene of trouble. A man was being carried in by a policeman and another lodger. A wrecked bicycle, the front wheel completely twisted, lay at the side of the road. The man, coming home from work had looked behind over his shoulder, his front wheel had caught in a drain, and he was flung over the handlebars.

His right ankle was badly sprained. "I shall lose my job, I shall lose my job," he was moaning. "I have to go to Caen on a furniture delivery tomorrow."

Caen? The name was vaguely familiar. Caen? I looked it up. A town some hundred and twenty-five miles from Paris and on the way to Cherbourg, it was roughly seventy-five miles from Cherbourg. I thought it over and went to him.

"I want to get to Cherbourg or Le Havre," I said. "I will go on the furniture van and do your job if there is someone to bring the van back. You can collect the money for it. I will be satisfied with the trip."

He looked at me in joy. "But yes, it can be arranged, my mate drives, we have to load furniture from a big house here and take it to Caen and unload it." By fast work it was arranged. On the morrow I was going to be a furniture remover's assistant, unpaid.

Henri, the driver, could easily have obtained a certificate of incompetence. In one thing only was he a past-master. He knew every dodge imaginable to get out of doing work. Just out of sight of the house, he stopped and said, "You drive, I'm tired." He wandered round to the back, perched on the most comfortable furnishings he could find, and went to sleep. I drove.

At Caen he said, "You start unloading, I must get these papers signed." Everything except the two-man things were in the house by the time he returned. Slouching off again, he returned with the gardener who helped me carry things in. He "directed" us so that the walls would not be damaged! Unloaded, I climbed into the driver's seat. Henri unthinkingly climbed up beside me. I turned the van and drove to the railway station which I had noticed some way up the road. There I stopped, took out my two cases, and said to Henri, "Now you drive!" With that I turned and entered the station.

There was a train for Cherbourg in twenty minutes. I bought my ticket, had something to eat, and then the train just pulled in. We rattled off into the

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growing dusk. At Cherbourg Town Station I left my two cases and wandered off down the Quai de l'Entrepot looking for accommodation. At last I found it, Lodgings for Seamen. I entered, booked a very modest room, paid in advance, and went back for my luggage. Being tired, I went to bed and slept. In the morning I associated as much as possible with other lodger-seamen who were waiting for ships. By great good fortune I was during the next few days able to visit the engine rooms of vessels at the Port. During the week I haunted the Shipping Agents in search of an appointment which would take me across the Atlantic.

The Agents would look at my papers, examine my Discharge Book, and ask, "So you ran out of funds on vacation? and want to work a one-way trick? All right, we will keep you in mind and let you know if anything turns up." I mixed more and more with seamen, learning their terminology, learning all that I could of personalities. Above all I learned that the less one said and the more one listened, the greater one's reputation for intelligence became.

At last, after some ten days, I was called to a Shipping Agent's Office. A short, square looking man was sitting with the Agent. "Are you free to sail to-night, if wanted?" asked the Agent.

"I am free to sail now, sir," I replied. The short, square man was watching me closely. Then he shot out a spate of questions in an accent which I found hard to follow. "The Chief here is a Scotsman, his Third Engineer has fallen sick and has been taken to hospital. He wants you to go aboard with him immediately," translated the Agent. By great concentration I was able to follow the rest of the Scotsman's speech and was able to answer his questions satisfactorily.

"Get your dunnage," he said at last, "and come aboard."

Back at the Lodging House I hastily settled my bill, picked up my cases, and hired a cab to the ship's side. She was a battered old thing, rust streaked, sadly in need of a coat of paint, and woefully small for Atlantic crossings.

"Aye," said a man on the dockside, "she's past her prime ye ken, and in a following sea she wallows fit t' twist yer guts out!"

I hurried up the gangplank, left my cases by the galley, and clattered down the iron ladder to the engine room where Chief Mac was waiting. He discussed the engines with me and was satisfied with my answers. "Okay, Laddie," he said at last, "we'll go an' sign the Articles. The Steward will show you to your cabin." We hastened back to the Shipping Office, "signed Articles", and then returned to the ship. "Ye're on straight away, Laddie," said Mac. So, probably for the first time in history, a Tibetan Lama, posing as an American,

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took his place aboard ship as a watch-keeping engineer. The eight hours I first served, with the ship moored, was a blessing to me. My intensive reading was now supplemented by some practical experience, and I felt fully confident.

With the clanging of bells, and the noisy hissing of steam, the shining steel rods rose and fell, rose and fell. Wheels turned faster and faster, bringing the ship to life. There was the smell of heated oil and steam. To me this was a strange life, as strange as life in a lamasery would be to Chief Mac who now stood so stolidly, pipe between his teeth, one hand resting lightly on a glittering steel control wheel. The bell clanged again and the telegraph dial indicated "half astern". With scarcely a glance Mac spun the wheel and flicked a lever. The thudding of the engine increased and the whole hull quivered lightly. "Stop!" said the telegraph dial, followed quickly by "half ahead".

Almost before Mac could spin the controls, the bell clanged again for "full-ahead". Smoothly the ship forged ahead. Mac stepped forward to me, "Ah, Laddie," he said, "ye've done yer eight hours. Be off with ye. Tell the Steward Ah want ma cocoa as ye step by."

Cocoa, food! It reminded me that I had not eaten for more than twelve hours. Hastily I climbed the steel ladders, reaching the deck and the open air. Spray was breaking over the bows, and the ship plunged somewhat as we headed out into open sea. Behind me the lights of the French coast were fading into the darkness. A sharp voice behind me brought me back to the present: "Who are you, my man?" I turned and saw the First Mate standing beside me.

"Third Engineer, sir," I answered.

"Then why are you not in uniform?"

"I am a relief engineer, sir, joined at Cherbourg and went on watch immediately."

"Hrrumph," said the Mate. "Get into uniform right away, we must have discipline here." With that he stalked off as if he were First Mate on one of the Queens instead of just on a dirty, rusty old tramp ship.

At the galley door I gave Chief Mac's order. "You the new Third?" said a voice behind me. I turned and saw the Second Engineer who had just entered.

"Yes, sir," I replied. "I am just on my way to get into uniform and then I want some food."

He nodded, "I will come along with you. The Mate has just complained that you are out of uniform. Said he thought you were a stowaway. Told him you had just joined and had gone straight on duty." He walked along with me and

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pointed out that my cabin was just across the alley from his. "Call when you are ready," he said, "and we will go for dinner."

I had had to have the uniforms altered to fit me. Now as I stood dressed as a Merchant Marine Officer I wondered what my Guide the Lama Mingyar Dondup would say if he could see me. It made me chuckle to think what a sensation I would be in Lhasa if I appeared there dressed thus. Calling for the Second Engineer, we walked together back to the Officers' Mess for dinner. The Captain, already at his table, gave us a scowling glance from beneath his bushy eyebrows.

"Faugh!" said the Second Engineer, when the first course was placed before him. "Same old pig-swill, don't you ever get a change round here?"

"Mister!" The Captain's voice nearly lifted us from our seats. "Mister! You are always complaining, you should change to another ship when we get to New York."

Somebody started to snigger, a snigger which changed to an embarrassed cough as the Captain looked angrily in his direction. The rest of the meal was in silence until the Captain, finished before us, left. "Hell ship," said one officer. "The Old Man was a Jimmy-the-One (First Mate) in the British Navy during the war. He was on a transport and he cannot get it out of his system."

"Aw, you guys is nuts, always bellyachin'," said another voice.

"No," whispered the Second to me, "he is not American, just a Puerto Rican who has seen too many movies."

I was tired, and went out on deck before turning in. Just off to the lee side the men were dumping the hot ashes in the sea and getting rid of the accumulated garbage of a stay in port. The ship was tossing a bit, and I walked off to my cabin. The walls were plastered with pinup girls, which I ripped off and tossed into the waste paper basket. As I undressed and tumbled into my bunk I knew that I would be able to carry out my duties.

"Time up!" yelled a voice, and a hand opened the door and flicked on the light switch.

"Time already?" I thought to myself. Why, it seemed that I had barely got to sleep. I glanced at my watch, and rolled out. A wash, dressed, and I was on my way to breakfast. The Mess was deserted now, and I ate alone and quickly. With a glance outside at the first streaks of light across the side, I hurried down the steel ladders to the engine room. "You're punctual," said the Second Engineer. "That I like. Nothing to report except that there are two greasers in the tunnel. Oh well, I'm going," he said, yawning heavily.

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The engines thudded on rhythmically, monotonously, every revolution bringing us nearer to New York. Outside in the stokehold the “black-gang” tended their fires, raking and slicing, keeping the head of steam just short of the red line. From out of the tunnel housing the propeller shaft two sweat-stained and dirty men emerged. Fortune was with me, bearing temperatures were normal, there was nothing to report. Grubby papers were shoved at me, coal consumed, CO₂ percentages, and other data. I signed, sat down, and wrote up the Engine Room Log for my watch.

“How she doin’ Mister?” said Mac as he came clattering down the companionway.

“All right,” I answered. “Everything normal.”

“Good,” said Mac. “I wish I could make that flaming Captain normal. He says we used too much coal last trip. What should I do? Tell him to row the ship?” He sighed, put on steel-framed glasses, read the Log and signed it. The ship forged on through the rough Atlantic. Day followed day in monotonous sameness. This was not a happy ship, the Deck Officers sneered at the Engine staff. The Captain was a gloomy man who thought he commanded an Atlantic liner instead of a wallowing old tub of a freighter. Even the weather was bad. One night I could not sleep for the heaving and tossing, and I went on deck. The wind was howling through the rigging in a depressing threnody, reminding me irresistibly of the time when I had stood upon the roof of the Chakpori with the Lama Mingyar Dondup and Jigme, and went off into the astral. At the lee side of the ship, amidships, a lonely figure clutched desperately at the rail and heaved and heaved, almost “bringing his heart up,” as he later said. I was quite immune to seasickness, and found considerable amusement at the sight of livelong sailors being bowled over like this.

The binnacle light in the bridge cast the faintest glow upwards. In the Captain’s cabin all was dark. Spray rushed over the bows and swept aft to where I was standing. The ship rolled and tossed like a thing demented, with the masts describing a crazy arc across the night sky. Far off to starboard an Atlantic liner, all lights blazing, came towards us, corkscrewing with a motion which must have left the passengers unhappy. With a following wind she was making good time, her immense superstructure acting as a sail.

“She’ll soon be in Southampton Roads,” I thought to myself as I turned to go below.

At the height of the storm one of the bilge pump intakes clogged on something dislodged by the violence of the ship’s motion, and I had to go right down in the bilge and supervise the men who were working on it. The noise was

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terrific, the propeller shaft was vibrating as the propeller alternately raced madly when the ship's stern was in the air, and juddered when the stern dipped in the water before bouncing to the crest of the next wave.

In the holds the deckmen were working feverishly securing a heavy crate of machinery which had broken loose. It seemed to me so strange that there was so much friction on this ship, we were all doing our jobs to the best of our abilities. What did it matter if one man worked among machines in the bowels of the ship, while another walked the deck, or stood in the Docking Bridge to watch the water slide along the side of the ship?

Work? There was plenty of work here, pumps to be overhauled, stuffing boxes to be repacked, glands to be inspected and checked, and the lines to the winches overhauled in preparation for docking at New York.

Chief Mac himself was a good worker and a fair man. He loved his engines as a mother loves her first born child. One afternoon I was sitting on a grating waiting to go on watch. Light storm-clouds scudded across the sky, and there was a hint of the heavy rain which was to follow. I sat in the shelter of a ventilator, reading. Suddenly a heavy hand descended upon my shoulder, and a booming Scottish voice said, "Ah! Laddie, I wondered what ye did with yer spare time. What is it? Westerns? Sex?"

Smilingly I passed the book to him. "Marine engines," I said. "More interesting to me than Westerns or Sex!"

He grunted approvingly as he glanced through the book before passing it back to me. "Guid fer ye, Laddie," he said. "We'll make an engineer of ye yet, and ye'll soon be a Chief yer'sel if ye stick to that." Pushing his battered old pipe back in his mouth, he nodded amiably to me and said, "Ye can take over now, Laddie."

The ship was abustle. "Captain's Inspection, Third," whispered the Second. "He's a crazy guy, thinks he's on a liner, inspects the whole ship, cabins and all, every trip."

I stood beside my bunk as the Captain entered, followed by the First Mate and the Purser. "Hum," muttered the Great Man as he glanced disdainfully around. "No pinups?" he said. "I thought all Americans were leg-crazy!" He glanced at my engineering books, and a cynical smile played round his mouth. "Is there a novel inside that technical cover?" he asked. Without a word I stepped forward and opened every book at random. The Captain rubbed a finger here and there, on a rail, beneath the bunk, and on top of the door ledge. Looking at his still clean fingertips, he nodded in disappointment and stalked out. The Second smiled knowingly, "You got him that time, he's a nosey — —!"

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There was an air of tense expectancy. Men were getting out their shore-going togs, cleaning themselves up, trying to decide how to get their parcels through Customs. Men were talking of their families, of their girlfriends. All tongues were loosened, all restraints thrown off. Soon they would be ashore to go to friends and loved ones. Only I had nowhere to go, no one of whom to talk. Only I would walk ashore at New York as a stranger, friendless, unknown.

On the skyline stood the tall towers of Manhattan glistening in the sunlight after being washed by the rainstorm. Isolated windows threw back the rays of the sun after turning them to burnished gold. The Statue of Liberty—I noticed with her back to America—loomed up before us. “Half ahead,” clanged the telegraph. The ship slowed, and the little bow wave died as our momentum dropped.

“Stop,” said the telegraph as we nosed to our berth. Lines were thrown, and caught, and the ship was once more tied to the land. “Finished with engines,” said the telegraph. Steam died in the pipes with wailing hisses. The giant piston rods were stilled, and the ship wallowed gently at her moorings, but faintly disturbed by the wake of passing ships. We worked turning valves, bringing the auxiliary equipment to life, hoists and winches.

Up on deck men rushed round knocking the wedges off the hatch covers, dragging off tarpaulins, opening the holds. The Ship’s Agents came aboard, followed by the stevedores. Soon the ship was a madhouse of raucous voices bellowing commands. The cranes rattled and chuffed, and there was the continuous scuffle of heavy feet. The Port Medical Officer’s Deputy pored over the crew records. Police came aboard and took off a wretched stowaway of whom we in the Engine Room had heard nothing. The unfortunate man was led off in handcuffs, escorted by two burly, rough-looking policemen who led him to a waiting Police car and urgently pushed him inside.

We lined up, collected our money, signed for it and went on to get our Discharge Books. Chief Mac had written in mine, “Great devotion to duty. Efficient in all branches. Shall welcome him as a shipmate at any time.”

“What a pity,” I thought, “that I have to scrap all this, that I cannot continue.”

I went back to my cabin and tidied up, folding the blankets and putting them aside. Packing my books, dressing in civilian clothes, and placing my gear in the two suitcases. With a last look round I went out and shut the door behind me.

“Will ye no’ change yer mind?” said Chief Mac. “Yer a guid shipmate, and I’d be glad t’ put ye in fer Second after this round trip.”

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"No, Chief," I answered, "I want to move around a bit and get more experience."

"Experience is a wunnerful thing. Guid luck t' ye!"

I walked down the gangplank carrying my two cases. Off by the side of the moored ships. Another life before me; how I hated all this moving round, all this uncertainty, with no one to call "friend".

"Where ya born?" said the Customs man.

"Pasadena," I replied, thinking of the papers in my hand.

"What ya got?" he demanded.

"Nothing," I told him. He looked at me sharply, "Okay, open up," he snarled. Placing my cases before him I opened them. He rummaged and rummaged, then tipped everything out and examined the linings. "Pack 'em up," he said as he walked away and left me.

I packed my cases again, and walked out of the gates. Outside, in the mad roar of traffic, I stopped a moment to get my bearings and my breath. "Wassamadderwidyabud? Disisnooyoik!" said a crude voice behind me. Turning, I saw a policeman glaring at me.

"Any crime in stopping?" I answered him.

"Awgitmovin" he bellowed.

Slowly I picked up my suitcases and wandered up the road, marveling at the man-made metal mountains of Manhattan, I had never felt lonelier than now, completely alien to this part of the world. Behind me the roaring cop bellowed at some other unfortunate, "Wedontdodisinnooyoik. Git!" The people looked harassed, strained. Motor vehicles zoomed by at crazy speeds. There was the continual squeal of tires and the smell of burning rubber.

I walked on. At last I saw before me the sign "Seamen's Hostel," and I gratefully turned in at the door. "Sign," said a cold, impersonal voice. Carefully I completed the form thrust roughly at me, and handed it back with a "thank you".

"Don't thank me," said the cold voice, "I am not doing you any favor, this is my job." I stood waiting.

"Well, what is it?" said the voice. "Room three-oh-three, it said so on the form and on the key tag."

I turned away. How could one argue with a human automaton. I walked over to a man, obviously a sailor, sitting in a chair looking at a man's magazine.

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"We guys sure get in Jenny's hair," he said before I could speak. "What is your room number?" "Three-oh-three," I answered miserably. "My first time here."

"Three floors up," he said. "It'll be the third room to starboard." Thanking him, I walked over to a door marked "Elevator."

"Go and press the button," said the man in the chair. I did so, and after some moments the door was flung open, and a Negro boy beckoned me in. "Number?" he asked.

"Three-oh-three," I replied. He pressed a button and the little room moved swiftly up and came to a sudden halt. The Negro boy opened the door and said, "Toid."

The door closed behind me, and I was alone once more. Fumblingly, I looked at the key tag to again check the number, and then moved along to find my room. Yes, there it was, the number "303" was on a small plate above the third door to the right of the elevator. I inserted the key and turned it. The door opened, and I entered the room. Quite a small room, I saw, something like a ship's cabin. As soon as I shut the door I saw a printed list of Rules. Carefully reading them, I found that I could stay only twenty-four hours unless I was actually joining a ship, then the maximum time one was permitted to stay was forty-eight hours. Twenty four hours! So even now there was no peace. I set down my cases, brushed the dust from me, and went out in search of food and newspapers so that I could see if there were any jobs advertised which I could do.

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CHAPTER SIX

New York seemed such an unfriendly place. People whom I attempted to stop to enquire the way gave me a frightened look and hurried on. After a night's sleep, I had my breakfast and boarded a bus for the Bronx. From the papers I had gained the idea that lodgings would be cheaper there.

Near Bronx Park I alighted and trudged along the street looking for a "Room for Rent" sign. A speeding car flashed between two delivery vans and on to the wrong side of the road, skidding, it mounted the sidewalk and struck me on the left side. Once again I heard the breaking of bones. As I slid to the sidewalk, and before merciful oblivion claimed me, I saw a man snatch up my two suitcases and hurry off.

The air was full of the sound of music. I was happy, comfortable after years of hardship. "Ah!" exclaimed the voice of the Lama Mingyar Dondup, "So you have had to come here again?" I opened my eyes to find him smiling down upon me, with the utmost compassion shining from his eyes. "Life upon Earth is hard and bitter, and you have had experiences from which, happily, most people are spared. It is just an interlude, Lobsang, just an unpleasant interlude. After the long night will come the awakening to a perfect day when no longer need you return to Earth, nor to any of the lower worlds."

I sighed. It was pleasant here and that accentuated even more the harshness and unfairness of the Earth life. "You, my Lobsang," said my Guide, "are living your last life upon Earth. You are clearing up all Karma and are also doing a momentous task, a task which evil powers seek to hinder."

Karma! It recalled vividly to my mind the lesson which I had learned in beloved, far-off Lhasa. . . .

The tinkling of the little silver bells had ended. No longer did the trumpets blare across the Valley of Lhasa, sounding loud and clear in the crisp, thin

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air. About me was uncanny silence, a silence that should not be. I awakened from my reverie just as the monks in the temple started their deep-toned Litany for the Dead. Dead? Yes! Of course, the Litany for the old monk who had so recently died. Died, after a lifetime of suffering, of service to others, of being misunderstood and unhanded.

“What a terrible Karma he must have had,” I said to myself. “What a wicked person he must have been in his past life to merit such retribution.”

“Lobsang!” The voice behind me was like a clap of distant thunder. The blows that rained upon my shrinking body, well, they were not so distant, unfortunately.

“Lobsang! You here skulking, showing disrespect to our departed Brother, take that, and that!” Suddenly the blows and the abuse stopped as if by magic. I turned my anguished head round and gazed up at the giant figure towering above me, heavy cudgel still in his upraised hand.

“Proctor,” said a well-loved voice, “that was vicious punishment indeed for a small boy. What has he done to suffer that? Has he desecrated the Temple? Has he shown disrespect to the Golden Figures? Speak, and explain your cruelty.”

“Lord Mingyar Dondup,” whined the tall Proctor of the Temple, “the boy was here daydreaming when he should have been at the Litany with his fellows.”

The Lama Mingyar Dondup, no small man himself, gazed sadly up at the seven-foot Man of Kham standing before him. Firmly the Lama spoke, “You may go, Proctor, I will deal with this myself.” As the Proctor respectfully bowed, and turned away, my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup turned to me, “Now Lobsang, let us go to my room so that you can recount the tale of your numerous well-punished sins.” With that he stooped gently and lifted me to my feet. In my short life no one but my Guide had ever shown me kindness, and I was hard put to keep back tears of gratitude and love.

The Lama turned away and slowly walked up the long deserted corridor. I humbly followed in his footsteps, followed even eagerly, knowing that no injustice could ever come from this great man.

At the entrance to his room he stopped, turned to me, and put a hand on my shoulder, “Come along, Lobsang, you have committed no crime, come in and tell me about this trouble.” With that he pushed me before him and bade me be seated. “Food, Lobsang, Food, that also is upon your mind. We must have food and tea while we talk.”

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Leisurely he rang his silver bell, and an attendant entered. Until food and drink was placed before us we sat in silence, I thinking of the sureness with which all my offences were found out and punished almost before they were committed.

Once again a voice broke into my thoughts. "Lobsang! You are daydreaming! Food, Lobsang, Food is before you and you, you of all people, do not see it." The kindly, bantering voice brought me back to attention and almost automatically I reached out for those sweet sugared cakes which so greatly entranced my palate. Cakes which had been brought from far-off India for the Dalai Lama, but which through his kindness were available to me.

For some moments more we sat and ate, or rather I ate, and the Lama smiled benevolently upon me. "Now, Lobsang," he said when I showed signs of repletion, "what is all this about?"

"Master," I replied, "I was reflecting upon the terrible Kharma of the monk who died. He must have been a very wicked man in many lives past. So thinking, I forgot all about the temple service, and the Proctor came upon me before I was able to escape."

He burst out with a laugh, "So, Lobsang, you would have tried to escape from your Kharma if you could!" I looked glumly at him, knowing that few could outrun the athletic proctors, so very fleet of foot.

"Lobsang, this matter of Kharma. Oh how it is misunderstood by some even here in the Temple. Make yourself comfortable, for I am going to talk to you on this matter at some length."

I shuffled around a bit and made a show of "getting comfortable." I wanted to be out with the others, not sitting here listening to a lecture, for even from such a great man as the Lama Mingyar Dondup a lecture was a lecture, and medicine with a pleasant taste was still medicine.

"You know all this, Lobsang, or should if you have paid any attention to your teachers (which I doubt!) but I will remind you again as I fear that your attention is still somewhat lacking." With that he gave me a piercing glance and resumed. "We come to this Earth as to a school. We come to learn our lessons. In our first attendance at school we are in the lowest class because we are ignorant and as yet have learned nothing. At the end of our term we either pass our examinations or fail them. If we pass we go on to a higher class when we return from the school vacation. If we fail, then we return to the same class as that which we left. If we fail in perhaps one subject only we may be permitted to go on to the higher class and there also study the subject of our failure."

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This was speaking to me in language which I well understood. I knew all about examinations, and failing in a subject and having to go on to a higher class, competing with bigger boys, and at the same time studying in what should have been my free time, studying under the eagle eye of some moldy old lama teacher, one who was so ancient that he forgot all about his own boyhood days.

There was a crash, and I jumped so much with fright that I almost left the ground. "Ah, Lobsang, so we did get a reaction after all," said my Guide as he laughingly replaced the silver bell he had dropped behind me; "I spoke to you on a number of occasions, but you were wandering far afield."

"I am sorry, Honorable Lama," I replied, "but I was thinking how clear your lecture was."

The Lama stifled a smile and continued. "We come to this Earth as do children to a schoolroom. If, in our lifetime, we do well and learn that which caused us to come, then we progress further and take up life in a higher state. If we do not learn our lessons we come back to almost the same type of body and conditions. In some cases a man, in a past life, will have shown much cruelty to others. He must come back to this Earth and try to atone for his misdeeds. He must come back and show kindness to others. Many of the greatest reformers in this life were offenders in the past. So the Wheel of Life revolves, bringing first riches to one, and then poverty to another, and the beggar of today may be the prince of tomorrow, and so it continues from life to life."

"But Honorable Lama," I interjected, "does it mean that if a man is now a beggar with one leg, he must have cut off the leg of some other person in another life?"

"No, Lobsang, it does not. It means that the man needed to be poor, and needed to suffer the loss of one leg so that he could learn his lesson. If you have to study figures you take your slate and your abacus. If you are going to study carving you take a knife and a piece of wood. You take tools suitable for the task in hand. So it is with the type of body we have, the body and our life circumstances are the most suitable for the task we have to overcome."

I thought of the old monk who had died, he was always bewailing his "bad Karma", wondering what he had done to deserve such a hard life. "Ah, yes, Lobsang," said my Guide, reading my thoughts, "the unenlightened always bemoan the workings of Karma. They do not realize that they are sometimes the victims of the bad acts of others, and though they suffer unjustly now, yet in a later life they will have full recompense. Again I say to you, Lobsang, you cannot judge a man's evolution by his present status on Earth, nor can you condemn him as evil because he seems to be in difficulties. Nor should you

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condemn, for until you have all the facts, which you cannot have in this life, you have no sound judgment."

The voice of the temple trumpets echoing through the halls and corridors summoned us from our talk to attend the evening service. Voice of the temple trumpet? Or was it a deep-toned gong? It seemed that the gong was in my head, booming away, jerking me, bringing me back to life on Earth. Wearily I opened my eyes. Screens were around my bed and an oxygen cylinder stood nearby.

"He is awake, Doctor," said a voice. Shuffling of feet, and the rustle of well-starched cloth. A red face came into range of my vision. "Ah!" said the American doctor. "So you have come back to life! You sure got yourself smashed up!" I gazed blankly at him.

"My suitcases?" I asked, "Are they all right?"

"No, a guy made off with them and the police cannot find him."

Later in the day the police came to my bedside seeking information. My cases had been stolen. The man whose car had knocked me down and gravely injured me was not insured. He was an unemployed Negro. Once again I had my left arm broken, four ribs broken, and both feet smashed.

"You will be out in a month," cheerily said the doctor. Then double pneumonia set in. For nine weeks I lingered in the hospital. As soon as I was able to get up I was asked about payment. "We found two hundred and sixty dollars in your wallet, we shall have to take two hundred and fifty for your stay here."

I looked at the man aghast. "But I shall have no job, nothing," I said. "How shall I live on ten dollars?"

The man shrugged his shoulders. "Oh you will have to sue the Negro. You have had treatment and we have to be paid. The case is nothing to do with us; make an action against the man who caused the trouble."

Shakily I went down the stairs. Tottered into the street. No money, other than ten dollars. No job, nowhere to live. How to live, that was the problem. The janitor jerked his thumb, "Up the street, Employment Agency there, go see them." Nodding dumbly, I wandered off, looking for my only hope. In a shoddy side-street I saw a battered sign, "Jobs". The climb to the third floor office was almost more than I could manage. Gasping, I clung to the rail at the top until I felt a little better.

"Kin ye scrub, Bud?" said the yellow-toothed man, rolling a ragged cigar between his thick lips. He eyed me up and down. "Guess you have just

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come out of the penitentiary or the hospital," he said. I told him all that had happened, how I had lost my belongings and my money.

"So you want some bucks mighty fast," he said, reaching for a card and filling in some details. He gave it to me, and told me to take it to a hotel with a very celebrated name, one of the hotels! I went, spending precious cents on bus fares.

"Twenty dollars a week and one meal per day," said the Staff Manager. So, for "twenty dollars and one meal per day" I washed mountains of filthy plates, and scrubbed endless stairs for ten hours each day.

Twenty dollars a week-and one meal. The meals served to the staff were not of the same quality as those served to the guests. Staff meals were rigidly supervised and checked. My wages were so poor that I could not afford a room. I made my home in the parks, beneath arches and bridges, and learned to move at night before the Cop on the Beat came along with his prodding night stick and his gruff "Getamoveonwillya?" I learned to stuff my clothes with newspaper to keep out the bitter winds that swept New York's deserted streets by night. My one suit of clothes was travel-worn and work-stained, and I had no change of underwear. To wash my clothing I locked myself in the Men's Room, removed my underwear, put my trousers on again, and washed my clothing in a basin, drying them on the steam pipes after, for until I could wear them I could not go out. My shoes had holes in the soles, and I patched them with cardboard, while watching the garbage bins for any better pair which a guest might throw out.

But there were many keen eyes and many eager hands to examine the "guest-trash" before it reached me. I lived and worked on one meal a day, and plenty of water. Gradually I accumulated a change of clothing, a secondhand suit, and secondhand shoes. Slowly I accumulated a hundred dollars.

One day I heard two guests talking as I worked near a service door. They were discussing the failure of an advertisement to bring in a reply from the type of man they wanted. I worked slower and slower. "Knowledge of Europe. Good voice, radio training . . ."

Something happened to me, I dashed round the door and exclaimed, "I can claim all those!" The men looked at me dumbfounded and then broke into yells of laughter. The Chief Waiter and an under waiter dashed forward, utter fury on their faces. "Out!" said the Chief Waiter as he grabbed violently at my collar, ripping my poor old jacket from top to bottom. I turned on him and threw the two halves of my jacket in his face: "Twenty dollars a week does not enable you to speak to a man like that!" I said fiercely. One of the two men looked at

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me in hushed horror, "Twenty dollars a week, you said?"

"Yes, sir, that is what I am paid, and one meal a day. I sleep in the parks, I am chased from place to place by the police. I came to this 'Land of Opportunity' and on the day after I landed a man ran me down with his car, and when I was unconscious an American robbed me of all I had. Proof? Sir? I will give you proof, then you check my story!" The Floor Manager rushed up, wringing his hands and almost weeping. We were ushered into his office.

The others sat down, I was left standing. The older of the two men phoned the hospital, and after some delay, my story was authenticated in every detail. The Floor Manager pressed a twenty-dollar bill on me, "Buy a new jacket," he said, "and clear out!"

I pressed the money back into his flabby hands. "You take it," I replied, "You will need it more than I."

I turned to leave and as I reached the door a hand shot out and a voice said "Stop!" The older man looked me straight in the eyes. "I think that you may suit us. We will see. Come to Schenectady tomorrow. Here is my card." I turned to go. "Wait; here are fifty dollars to see you there."

"Sir," I said, refusing the money offered, "I will get there under my own steam. I will not take money until you are sure that I will meet your requirements, for I could not possibly pay you back if you do not want me."

I turned and left the room. From my locker in the Staff Room I took my meager belongings and walked out in the street. I had nowhere to go but to a seat in the park. No roof, no one to whom to say good-bye. In the night the pitiless rain came down and soaked me to the skin. By good fortune I kept my "new suit" dry by sitting on it. In the morning I had a cup of coffee and a sandwich and found that the cheapest way to travel from New York City to Schenectady was by bus. I bought my ticket and settled in a seat. Some passenger had left a copy of the Morning Times on a seat, so I read through it to keep me from brooding on my very uncertain future. The bus droned on, eating up the miles. By afternoon I was in the city. I went to the public baths, made myself as smart as possible, put on my clean clothes and walked out.

At the radio studios the two men were waiting. For hour after hour they plied me with questions. Man after man came in and went out again. At last they had my whole story. "You say you have papers stored with a friend in Shanghai?" said the senior man. "Then we will engage you on a temporary basis and will cable to Shanghai to have your things sent on here. As soon as we see these papers, you will be on a permanent footing. A hundred and ten dollars a week; we will discuss it further when we see those papers. Have them

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sent at our expense.”

The second man spoke, “Sure guess he could do with an advance,” he said.

“Give him a month in advance,” said the first man. “Let him start the day after tomorrow.”

So began a happy period in my life. I liked the work, and I gave complete satisfaction. In the course of time my papers, my age-old crystal, and a very few other things arrived. The two men checked everything, and gave me a fifteen dollar a week raise. Life was beginning to smile upon me, I thought.

After some time, during which I saved most of my money, I began to experience the feeling that I was getting nowhere, I was not getting on with my allotted task in life. The senior man was very fond of me now, and I went to him and discussed the problem, telling him that I would leave when he found a suitable replacement for me. For three months more I stayed.

My papers had come from Shanghai, among them a passport issued by the British authorities at the British Concession. During those far-off war days the British were very fond of me, for they made use of my services. Now, well, now they think they have no more to gain. I took my passport and other papers to the United Kingdom Embassy in New York, and after a lot of trouble and much delay, managed to obtain first a visa and then a work permit for England.

At last a replacement for me was obtained, and I stayed two weeks to “show him the ropes,” then I left. America is perhaps unique in that a person who knows how, can travel almost anywhere free. I looked at various newspapers until I saw, under “Transportation”, the following: “California, Seattle, Boston, New York. Gas free, Call 000000 XXX Auto Drive-away.”

Firms in America want cars delivered all over the continent. Many drivers want to travel, so a good and cheap method is for the would-be driver to get in touch with the auto delivery firm. On passing a simple driving test one is then given gas (petrol) vouchers for certain selected filling stations on the route.

I called on the XXX Auto Drive-away and said I wanted to drive a car to Seattle. “No difficulty at all, at all,” said the man with the Irish brogue. “I am looking for a good driver to take a Lincoln there. Drive me round, let’s see how you shape.” As I drove him round he told me of various useful matters. He seemed to have taken quite a liking to me, then he said, “I recognized your voice, you were an Announcer.” This I confirmed. He said, “I have a shortwave radio which I use to keep in touch with the Old Country. Something wrong with it, it won’t get the short waves any more. The local men do not understand this

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type of radio, do you?"

I assured him that I would have a look at it and he invited me to his home that evening, even lending me a car with which to get there. His Irish wife was exceptionally pleasant, and they left within me a love for Ireland which became intensified when I went there to live.

The radio was a very famous English model, an exceptionally fine Eddystone which has no peer. Fortune smiled upon me. The Irishman picked up one of the plug-in coils and I saw how he held it. "Let me have that coil," I said, "and have you a magnifying glass?" He had, and a quick examination showed me that in his incorrect handling of the coil he had broken a wire free from one of the pins. I showed it to him. "Have you a soldering iron and solder?" I asked. No, but his neighbor had. Off he dashed, to return with a soldering iron and solder. It was the work of minutes to resolder the wire, and the set worked. Simple little adjustments to the trimmers and it worked better. Soon we were listening to the B.B.C. in London, England.

"I was going to send the radio back to England to be put right," said the Irishman. "Now I'm going to do something for you. The owner of the Lincoln wanted one of our firm's drivers to take it to him in Seattle. He is a rich man. I am going to put you on our payroll so you can get paid. We will give you eighty dollars and we will charge him a hundred and twenty. Done?" Done? Most certainly, it suited me just fine.

On the following Monday morning I started off. Pasadena was my first destination. I wanted to make sure that the Ship's Engineer whose papers I had used really had no relatives. New York, Pittsburgh, Columbus, Kansas City, the miles mounted up. I did not hurry, I allowed a week for the trip. By night I slept in the big car to save hotel expenses, pulling off the road wherever I thought suitable.

Soon I was at the foothills of the American Rockies, enjoying the better air, enjoying it even more as the car climbed higher and higher. For a whole day I lingered here in the mountainous ranges, and then I drove off to Pasadena. The most scrupulous enquiries failed to reveal that the Engineer had any relatives. He seemed to have been a morose sort of man who preferred his own company to that of any other person.

Through the Yosemite National Park I drove. Crater Lake National Park, Portland, and finally Seattle. I took the car into the garage where it was carefully inspected, greased and washed. Then a call was made by the garage manager. "Come on," he said to me, "he wants us to take it over to him." I drove the Lincoln, and the manager drove another car so that we had return

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transportation.

Up the spacious drive of a big house, and three men appeared. The manager was very deferential to the frosty-faced man who had bought the Lincoln. The two men with him were automobile engineers who proceeded to give the Lincoln a thorough examination. "It has been very carefully driven," said the senior engineer, "you may take delivery with complete confidence."

The frosty-faced man nodded condescendingly at me. "Come along to my study," he said, "I am going to give you a bonus of a hundred dollars—for you alone—because you have driven so carefully."

"Man, oh! Man!" said the manager afterwards. "That was mighty big of him, you sure made a hit."

"I want a job taking me into Canada," I said. "Can you help me?"

"Well," replied the manager, "you really want to go to Vancouver and I have nothing in that direction, but I have a man who wants a new De Soto. He lives at Oroville, right on the Border. He will not drive that far himself. He'd be good. I'll call him."

"Gee, Hank!" said the manager to the man on the telephone, "Will ye quit yer dickering! and say if you want the De Soto?" He listened for a while and then broke in, "Well, ain't I a-telling you? I gotta guy here who is coming to Oroville on his way to Canada. He brought a Lincoln from New York. What say, Hank?" Hank babbled away at length in Oroville. His voice came through to me as a confused jumble of sound. The manager sighed with exasperation. "Well, ain't you an ornery doggone crittur?" he said. "You can place your cheque in the bank, guess I've known you for twenty years and more, not scairt of you running out on me." He listened for a little longer. "Oo-kay," he said at last, "I will do that. Yep, I'll add it on the bill." He hung up the receiver and let out his breath in a long, low whistle. "Say, Mister," he said to me, "D'ye know anything about wimmin?" Women? What did he think I knew about women? Who does know about them? They are enigmas even to themselves! The manager saw my blank look and continued, "Hank up there, he's been a bachelor for forty years, that I know. Now he asks for you to bring up some feminine fripperies for him. Well, well, well, guess the ol' daug's gone gay. I shall ask the Missus what to send."

Later in the week I drove out to Seattle in a brand new De Soto and a load of women's clothes. Mrs. Manager had sensibly telephoned Hank to see what it was all about! Seattle to Wenatchee, Wenatchee to Oroville. Hank was satisfied, so I wasted little time but pressed on into Canada. For a few days I stayed at Osoyoos. By not a little good fortune I was able to make my way across

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Canada, from Trail, through Ottawa, Montreal, and Quebec. There is no point in going into that here, because it was so unusual that it may yet be the subject of another book.

Quebec is a beautiful city with the disadvantage that in some parts of it one is unpopular unless one can speak French. My own knowledge of the language was just sufficient to get me through! I frequented the waterfront, and by managing to obtain a Seaman's Union Card, I joined a ship as deck hand. Not a highly paid job, but one which enabled me to work my way across the Atlantic once more. The ship was a dirty old tramp. The Captain and the Mates had long ago lost any enthusiasm for the sea and their ship. Little cleaning work was done. I was unpopular because I did not gamble or talk of affairs with women. I was feared because the attempts of the ship's bully to assert his superiority over me resulted in him screaming for mercy. Two of his gang fared even worse, and I was hauled before the Captain and reprimanded for disabling members of the crew. There was no thought that I was merely defending myself! Apart from those very minor incidents, the journey was uneventful, and soon the ship was making her slow way up the English Channel. I was off duty and on deck as we passed The Needles and entered the Solent, that strip of water bounded by the Isle of Wight and the mainland. Slowly we crept up past Netley Hospital, with its very beautiful grounds. Up past the busy ferries at Woolston, and into the Harbor at Southampton.

The anchor dropped with a splash, and the chain rattled through the hawse-holes. The ship swung head to stream, the engine room telegraph rang out, and the slight vibration of the engine ceased. Officials came aboard, examined the ship's papers and poked about in the crew's quarters. The Port Medical Officer gave us clearance, and slowly the ship steamed up to her moorings. As a member of the crew, I stayed aboard until the ship was unloaded, then, paid off, I took my scanty belongings and went ashore.

"Anything to declare?" asked the Customs Officer.

"Nothing at all," I replied, opening my case as directed.

He looked through my few possessions, closed the case, and scribbled his sign on it in chalk.

"How long are you staying?" he asked.

"Going to live here, sir," I replied.

He looked at my Passport, Visa and Work Permit with approval. "Okay," he motioned me through the gate. I walked on, and turned to take a last look at the ship I had just left. A stunning blow almost knocked me to the ground and I

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turned quickly. Another Customs Officer had been hurrying in from the street, late for duty, he had collided with me and now he sat half dazed in the roadway. For a moment he sat there, then I went to help him up. He struck out at me in fury, so I picked up my case to move on.

“Stop!” he yelled.

“It is all right, sir,” said the Officer who had passed me through, “He has nothing and his papers are in order.”

“I will examine him myself,” shouted the Senior Official. Two other Officers stood by me, their faces showing considerable concern. One attempted to remonstrate, but was told roughly to “shut up”.

I was taken to a room, and soon the irate Officer appeared. He looked through my case, throwing my things on the floor. He searched the linings and bottom of the battered old case. Chagrined that nothing was to be found, he demanded my Passport. “Ah!” he exclaimed, “You have a Visa and a Work Permit. The Officer in New York had no authority to issue both. It is left to our discretion here in England.” He was beaming with triumph, and with a theatrical gesture he tore my Passport right across and threw it in the rubbish container. On an impulse, he picked up the tattered remnants, and stuffed them in his pocket. Ringing a bell, two men came in from the outer office. “This man has no papers,” he said, “He will have to be deported, take him to the Holding Cell.”

“But, Sir!” said one of the Officers, “I actually saw them, they were in order.”

“Are you questioning my ability?” roared the Senior man. “Do as I say!”

A man sadly took my arm. “Come on,” he said. I was marched out and lodged in a bare cell.

“By Jove, Old Boy!” said the Bright Young Man from the Foreign Office when he entered my cell much, much later. “All this is a frightful pother, what?” He stroked his baby-smooth chin and sighed noisily. “You see our position, Old Chap, it really is just too too simply desperate! You must have had papers, or the Wallahs in Quebec would not have let you embark. Now you have no papers. They must have been lost overboard. Q.E.D. Old Boy, what? I mean to say . . .”

I glowered at him and remarked, “My papers were deliberately torn up. I demand that I be released and be permitted to land.”

“Yes, yes,” replied the Bright Young Man, “but can you prove it? I have

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had a gentle breeze in my ear which told me exactly what happened. We have to stand by our uniformed staff, or the Press would be around our ears. Loyalty and esprit de corps, and all that sort of thing.”

“So,” I said, “you know the truth, that my papers were destroyed, yet you, in this much-vaunted ‘Land of the Free’, can stand blandly aside and watch such persecution?”

“My dear fellow, you merely had the Passport of a resident of an Annexed State, you are not a Commonwealth member by birth. I’m afraid you are rather out of our orbit. Now, Chappie, unless you agree that your papers were—ah!—lost overboard, we shall have to make a case against you for illegal entry. That might net you a stretch in the cooler for up to two years. If you play ball with us, you will merely be returned to New York.”

“New York? Why New York?” I asked.

“If you return to Quebec, you might cause us some trouble. We can prove that you came from New York. So it is up to you. New York or up to two years as an involuntary Guest of His Majesty. He added as an afterthought, “Of course, you would still be deported after you had served your sentence, and the Authorities would gladly confiscate that money which you have. Our suggestion will enable you to keep it.”

The Bright Young Man stood up and brushed imaginary specks of dust from his immaculate jacket. “Think it over Old Boy, think it over, we offer you a perfectly wizard way out!” With that he turned and left me alone in the cell.

Stodgy English food was brought in and I attempted to cut it up with the bluntest knife I have ever used. They might have thought that in my extremity I contemplated suicide. Well, no one would commit suicide with that knife. The day wore on. A friendly Guard tossed in some English newspapers. After a glance I put them aside, so far as I could see they dealt only in sex and scandal. With the coming of darkness I was brought a thick mug of cocoa and a slice of bread and margarine. The night was chilly, with a dankness that reminded me of tombs and moldering bodies.

The morning Guard greeted me with a smile which threatened to crack his stony face. “You leave tomorrow” he said. “A ship’s Captain has agreed to take you if you work your passage. You will be turned over to the New York Police when you arrive.”

Later in the morning an official arrived to tell me officially, and to tell me that I would be doing the hardest work aboard ship, trimming coal in the bunkers of an ancient freighter with no labor saving devices at all. There would be

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no pay and I would have to sign the Articles to say that I agreed to those terms. In the afternoon I was taken down to the Shipping Agent, under guard, wherein the presence of the Captain, I signed the Articles.

Twenty-four hours later, still under guard, I was taken to the ship and locked in a small cabin, being told that I would have to remain there until the ship was beyond the limits of territorial waters. Soon the thudding of the old engine awakened the ship to sluggish life. There was the clatter of heavy feet above me and by the rise and fall of the deck I knew that we were heading out into a choppy sea. Not until Portland Bill was well off to starboard, and receding in the distance, was I released. "Git crackin', chum," said the fireman, handing me a battered shovel and rake. "Clean out them there 'oles of clinker. Take 'em on deck and dump 'em. Look lively, now!"

"Aw! Looky here!" bawled the huge man in the foc'sle later when I went there. "We gotta Gook, or Chink or a Jap. Hey you," he said slapping me across the face, "Remember Pearl 'Arber?"

"Let 'im be, Butch," said another man, "the cops are arter 'im."

"Haw haw!" roared Butch, "Let's give 'im a workin' over fust, just fer Pearl 'Arber." He sailed in to me, fists going like pistons, and becoming more and more furious as none of his blows reached me. "Slippery swab, eh?" he grunted, reaching out in an attempt to get my throat in a stranglehold. Old Tzu, and others in far-off Tibet had well prepared me for such things. I dropped, limp, and Butch's momentum carried him forward. He tripped over me and smashed his face on the edge of the foc'sle table, breaking his jaw and nearly severing an ear on a mug which he broke in his fall. I had no more trouble with the crew.

Slowly the New York skyline loomed up ahead of us. We ploughed on, leaving a black wake of smoke in the sky from the inferior coal we were using, A Lascar stoker, looking fearfully over his shoulder, edged up to me. "De cops come for you soon," he said. "You good man, heard Chief saying what Cap'n told him. They got to keep their noses clean." He passed me over an oilskin tobacco pouch. "Put your money in that and slip over de side before dey gets you ashore." He whispered confidentially, telling me where the Police boat would head, telling me where I could hide, as he had done in the past. I listened with great care as he told me how to escape the Police hunt after I had jumped overboard. He gave me names and addresses of people who would help me and he promised to get in touch with them when he went ashore. "I have been in trouble like this," he said. "I got framed because of th' color of ma skin,"

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“Hey, you!” A voice bawled from the Bridge. “The Cap’n wants you. Double to it!” I hurried up to the Bridge, the Mate jerked a thumb in the direction of the Chart Room. The Captain was sitting at a table looking over some papers. “Ah!” he said, as he looked up at me. “I put you in charge of the police. Have you anything to tell me first?”

“Sir,” I replied, “my papers were all in order, but a senior Customs Officer tore them up.”

He gazed at me and nodded, looked at his papers again and apparently made up his mind. “I know the man you mean. I have had trouble with him myself. The face of officialdom must be saved, no matter what misery it causes for others. I know your story is true, for I have a friend at Customs who confirmed your tale.” He looked down again and fiddled with the papers. “I have a complaint here that you were a stowaway.”

“But, sir!” I exclaimed, “the British Embassy in New York can confirm who I am. The Shipping Agents in Quebec can do likewise.”

“My man,” sadly said the Captain, “You do not know the ways of the West. No enquiries will be made. You will be taken ashore, placed in a cell, tried, convicted, and sent to prison. Then you will be forgotten. When the time for your release is near, you will be detained until you can be deported back to China.

“That will be death, Sir,” I said.

He nodded. “Yes, but the course of official duty will have been followed. We on this ship had an experience ‘way back in Prohibition days. We were arrested on suspicion and heavily fined, yet we were quite innocent.” He opened the drawer in front of him and took out a small object. “I will tell the Police that you have been framed, I will help you all I can. They may handcuff you, but they will not search you until they get you ashore. Here is a key which fits the Police handcuffs. I will not give it to you, but will place it here, and turn away.” He placed the shiny key in front of me, rose from his desk, and turned to the chart behind him. I picked up the key and put it in my pocket.

“Thank you, Sir,” I said, “I feel better for your faith in me.”

In the distance I saw the Police boat coming up towards us, a white cascade of spray at the bows. Smartly it came alongside, executed a half turn, and edged in towards us. The ladder was lowered, and two policemen came aboard and made their way up to the Bridge, amid sour looks from members of the crew. The Captain greeted them, giving them a drink and cigars. Then he produced the papers from his desk. “This man has worked well, in my opinion he

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has been framed by a Government official. Given time to call at the British Embassy, he could prove his innocence.”

The senior policeman looked cynical, “All these guys are innocent; the penitentiaries are full of innocent men who have been framed, to listen to them. All we want is to get him tucked nicely in a cell and then we go off duty. “C’mon, fella!” he said to me. I turned to pick up my case.

“Aw, you won’t want that,” he said, hustling me along. On an afterthought he snapped the handcuffs round my wrists.

“Oh, you don’t want that,” called the Captain. “He can’t run anywhere, and how will he get down to your boat?”

“He can fall in the drink and we will fish him out,” replied the policeman, laughing coarsely.

Climbing down the ladder was not easy, but I managed it without mishap, to the obvious regret of the police. Once on the cutter, they took no more notice of me. We sped along past many ships and rapidly approached the Police jetty. “Now is the time,” I thought, and with a quick leap I was over the side, allowing myself to sink. With acute difficulty I slipped the key in the lock, and turned. The handcuffs came off and sank. Slowly, very slowly, I rose to the surface. The police cutter was a long way off, the men spotted me, and started firing. Bullet splashes were all around me as I sank again. Swimming strongly until I felt that my lungs would burst, I surfaced again. The police were far off, searching round the “obvious place”, where I would be expected to land. I crawled ashore at the least obvious place, but will not mention it in case some other unfortunate should need refuge.

For hours I lay on half sunken timbers, shivering and aching, with the scummy water swirling round me. There came the creak of rowlocks and the splashing of oars in the water. A row boat with three policemen came into sight.

I slid off the beam, and let myself sink in the water so that only my nostrils were above the surface. Although I was hidden by the beam, I kept in readiness for instant flight. The boat prowled up and down. At long, long last a hoarse voice said, “Guess he’s a stiff by now. His body will be recovered later. Let’s get off for some cawfee.” The boat drifted out of my range. After a long interval I dragged my aching body on the beam again, shivering almost uncontrollably.

The day ended, and stealthily I inched along the beam to a half rotten ladder. Gingerly I climbed up, and seeing no one, darted for the shelter of a shed. Stripping off my clothing, I wrung them as dry as possible. Off to the end

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of the wharf a man appeared, the Lascar. As he came down and was opposite me, I gave a low whistle. He stopped, and sat upon a bollard. "You kin come out cautious-like," he said. "De cops be sure out in force on de udder side. Man! You sure got dem boys rattled." He stood up and stretched, and looked around him. "Follow me," he said, "but I don't know you if you is caught. A colored gennulmun is waiting wit a truck. When we get dere you climb in de back and cover yo-self with de tarp."

He moved away, and giving him plenty of time, I followed, slipping from one shadowed building to another. The lapping of water around the piles and the far-off wail of a police car were the only sounds disturbing the peace. Suddenly there was the rattle of a truck engine being started and tail lights appeared just ahead. A huge Negro nodded to the Lascar and gave me, following behind, a friendly wink as he gestured to the back of his truck.

Painfully I climbed in and pulled the old tarpaulin over me. The truck moved on and stopped. The two men climbed out and one said, "We gotta load up a bit now move forward." I crawled towards the driver's cab, and there was the clatter of boxes being loaded on.

The truck moved on, jolting over the rough roads. Soon it came to a halt, and a rough voice yelled, "What have you got there, folks?"

"Only garbage, sir," said the Negro. Heavy footsteps came along beside me. Something poked about in the rubbish at the back. "Okay," said the voice, "on your way."

A gate clanged, the Negro shifted into gear, and we drove out into the night. We seemed to drive for hours, then the truck turned sharply, braked, and came to a halt. The tarpaulin was pulled off, and there stood the Lascar and the Negro, grinning down at me. I stirred wearily, and felt for my money. "I will pay you," I said.

"Pay nuthin'," said the Negro.

"Butch was going to kill me before we reached New York," said the Lascar. "You saved me, now I save you, and we put up a fight against the discrimination against us. Come on in."

"Race, creed, and color do not matter," I thought. "All men bleed red." They led me into a warm room where there were two light colored Negro women. Soon I was wrapped in hot blankets, eating hot food. Then, they showed me a place where I could sleep, and I drifted off.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

For two days and nights I slept, my exhausted body hovering between two worlds. Life had always been hard to me, always suffering and great misunderstanding. But now I slept.

My body was left behind me, left upon Earth. As I soared upwards I saw that one of the Negro women was looking down at my empty shell with great compassion on her face. Then she turned away and sat by a window, looking out upon the dingy street. Freed of the fetters of the body, I could see even more clearly the colors of the astral. These people, these colored people who were helping me when those of the white race could only persecute, were good. Suffering and hardships had refined their egos, and their insouciant attitude was merely to cover up their inner feelings. My money, all that I had earned by hardship, suffering and self-denial, was tucked beneath my pillow, as safe with these people as in the strongest bank.

I soared on and on, leaving the confines of time and space, entering astral plane after astral plane. At last I reached the Land of the Golden Light where my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup waited to receive me.

"Your sufferings have been truly great," he said, "but all that you have endured has been to good purpose. We have studied the people of Earth, and the people of strange, mistaken cults there who have and will persecute you, for they have little understanding. But now we have to discuss your future. Your present body is nearing the end of its useful life, and the plans which we have for this event must come to pass." He walked beside me along the banks of a beautiful river. The waters sparkled and seemed to be alive. On either bank there were gardens so wonderful that I could scarce believe my senses. The air itself seemed to vibrate with life. In the distance a group of people, clad in Tibetan robes, came slowly to meet us. My guide smiled at me, "This is an important meeting," he said, "for we have to plan your future. We have to see

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how research into the human aura can be stimulated, for we have noticed that when 'aura' is mentioned on Earth, most people try to change the subject."

The group moved nearer, and I recognized those of whom I had stood in awe. Now they smiled benevolently upon me, and greeted me as an equal. "Let us move to more comfortable surroundings," said one, "so that we may talk and discuss matters at leisure." We moved along the path in the direction from whence the men had come until, turning to follow a bend in the path, we saw before us a Hall of such surpassing beauty that involuntarily I stopped with a gasp of pleasure. The walls seemed to be of purest crystal, with delicate pastel shades and undertones of color which changed as one looked. The path was soft underfoot, and it needed little urging on the part of my Guide to persuade me to enter.

We moved in, and it was as if we were in a great Temple, a Temple without dark, clean, with an atmosphere that simply made one feel that this was Life. Through the main body of the building we went, until we came to what on Earth I would have called the Abbot's room. Here there was comfortable simplicity, with a single picture of the Greater Reality upon the wall. Living plants were about the walls, and from the wide windows one could see across a superb expanse of parkland.

We sat upon cushions placed upon the floor, as in Tibet. I felt at home, contented almost. Thoughts of my body back on Earth still disturbed me, for so long as the Silver Cord was intact, I would have to return. The Abbot—I will call him that although he was much higher—looked about him, then spoke. "From here we have followed all that has happened to you upon the Earth. We want first to remind you that you are not suffering from the effects of Karma, but are instead acting as our instrument of study. For all the bad that you now suffer, so shall you have your reward." He smiled at me, and added, "Although that does not help much when you are suffering upon Earth! However," he went on, "we have learned much, but there are certain aspects yet to be covered. Your present body has suffered too much and will shortly fail. We have established a contact in the Land of England. This person wants to leave his body. We took him to the astral plane and discussed matters with him. He is most anxious to leave, and will do all we require. At our behest he changed his name to one more suitable to you. His life has not been happy; he willingly discontinued association with relatives. Friends he had never made. He is upon a harmonic of yours. For the moment we will not discuss him further, for later, before you take his body, you will see just a little of his life. Your present task is to get your body back to Tibet that it may be preserved. By your efforts and sacrifices you have amassed money, you need just a little more to pay your fare. It will come through your continued efforts. But enough for now. For a day enjoy

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your visit here before returning to your body.”

This was bliss indeed, to be with my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, not as a child, but as an adult, as one who could appreciate that great man’s unusual abilities and character. We sat alone on a mossy hillside overlooking a bay of bluest water. The trees swayed to a gentle breeze and wafted to us the scent of cedar and pine. For hours we stayed thus, talking, discussing the past. My history was an open book to him, now he told me of his. So the day passed, and as the purple twilight came upon me, I knew that it was time to go, time to return to the troubled Earth with its bitter man and spiteful tongues, tongues that caused the evils of Earth.

“Hank! Oh, Hank! He is awake!” There was the creak of a chair being moved, and as I opened my eyes I saw the big Negro looking down at me. He was not smiling now, his face was full of respect, awe, even. The woman crossed herself and bowed slightly as she looked in my direction.

“What is it? What has happened?” I asked.

“We have seen a miracle. All of us.” The big Negro’s voice was hushed as he spoke.

“Have I caused you any trouble?” I asked.

“No, Master, you have brought us only joy,” the woman replied.

“I would like to make you a present,” I said, reaching for my money.

The Negro spoke softly, “We are poor folk, but we will not take your money. Make this your home until you are ready to leave. We know what you are doing.”

“But I would like to show my gratitude,” I answered.

“Without you I would have died.”

“And gone to Greater Glory!” said the woman, adding, “Master, you can give us something greater than money. Teach us to pray!”

For a moment I was silent, taken aback by the request.

“Yes,” I said, “I will teach you to pray, as I was taught.” All religions believe in the power of prayer, but few people understand the mechanics of the process, few understand why prayers work for some and seemingly not for others. Most Westerners believe that people of the East either pray to a graven image or do not pray at all. Both statements are untrue, and I am going to tell you now how you can remove prayer from the realm of mysticism and superstition and use it to help others, for prayer is a very real thing indeed. It is one

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of the greatest forces on this Earth when used as it was intended to be used.

“Most religions have a belief that each person has a Guardian Angel or someone who looks after him. That also is true, but the Guardian Angel is one-self, the other self, the other self which is at the other side of life. Very, very few people can see this angel, this Guardian of theirs, while they are on the Earth, but those who can are able to describe it in detail.

“This Guardian (we must call it something, so let us call it a Guardian) has not a material body such as we have on Earth. It appears to be ghostly; sometimes a clairvoyant will see it as a blue scintillating figure larger than life-size and connected to the flesh body by what is known as the Silver Cord, that Cord which pulses and glistens with life as it conveys messages from one to the other. This Guardian has not a body such as that of Earth, but it is still able to do things which the Earth body can do, with the addition that it can do very many more things which the Earth body cannot. For example, the Guardian can go to any part of the world in a flash. It is the Guardian which does astral traveling and relays back to the body through the Silver Cord that which is needed.

“When you pray, you pray to yourself, to your other self, to your Greater Self. If we knew properly how to pray we should send those prayers through the Silver Cord, because the telephone line we use is a very faulty sort of instrument indeed, and we have to repeat ourselves in order to make sure that the message gets through. So when you pray, speak as you would speak through a very long distance telephone line, speak with absolute clarity, and actually think of what you are saying. The fault, I should add, lies with us here on this world, lies with the imperfect body we have on this world, the fault is not in our Guardian. Pray in simple language making sure that your requests are always positive and never negative.

“Having framed your prayer to be absolutely positive and to be absolutely clear of any possibility of misunderstanding, repeat that prayer perhaps three times. Let us take an example; suppose, for instance, that you have a person who is ill and suffering, and you want to do something about it; you should pray for the relief of that person’s suffering. You should pray three times saying exactly the same thing each time. You should visualize that shadowy figure, that insubstantial figure, actually going to the house of the other person, following the route which you would follow yourself, entering the house and laying hands on that person and so effecting a cure. I will return to this particular theme in a moment, but first let me say, repeat that as many times as are necessary, and, if you really believe, then there will be an improvement.

“This matter of a complete cure; well, if a person has a leg amputated,

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no amount of prayer will replace that leg. But if a person has cancer or any other grave disease, then that can be halted. Obviously the less the seriousness of the complaint, the easier it is to effect a cure. Everyone knows of the records of miracle cures throughout the history of the world. Lourdes and many other places are famed for their cures, and these cures are effected by the other self, by the Guardian of the person concerned in association with the fame of the locality. Lourdes, for example, is known throughout the world as a place for miracle cures so people go there utterly confident that they will be cured, and very often that confidence is passed on to the Guardian of the person and so a cure is effected very, very easily. Some people like to think that there is a saint or angel, or some ancient relic of a saint, that does the cure, but in reality each person cures himself, and if a healer gets in touch with a person with the intention of curing that sick person, then a cure is effected only through the Guardian of that sick person. It all comes down, as I told you before, to yourself, the real self which you are when you leave this, the shadow life, and enter the Greater Reality. While upon Earth we all tend to think that this is the only thing that matters, but Earth, this world—no, this is the World of Illusion, the world of hardship, where we come to learn lessons not so easily learned in the kinder, more generous world to which we return.

“You may yourself have some disability, you may be ill, or you may lack the desired esoteric power. That can be cured, it can be overcome, if you believe it and if you really want it. Suppose you have a great desire, a burning desire, to help others; you may want to be a healer. Then pray in the seclusion of your private room, perhaps your bedroom. You should rest in the most relaxed position that you can find, preferably with your feet together and with your fingers interlinked, not in the usual attitude of prayer, but with your fingers interlinked. In that way you preserve and amplify the magnetic circuit of the body, and the aura becomes stronger, and the Silver Cord is able to convey messages more accurately. Then, having got yourself in the right position and in the right frame of mind, you should pray.

“You could pray, for example: ‘Give me healing power that I may heal others. Give me healing power that I may heal others. Give me healing power that I may heal others.’ Then have a few moments while you remain in your relaxed position, and picture yourself encompassed in the shadowy outline of your own body.

“As I told you before, you must visualize the route you would take to the sick person’s house, and then make that body travel in your imagination to the home of that person you desire to heal. Picture yourself, your Overself, arrived at the house, arrived in the presence of the person you desire to help. Picture yourself putting out your arm, your hand, and touching that person.

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Imagine a flow of life-giving energy going along your arm, through your fingers, into that other person like a vivid blue light. Imagine that the person is gradually becoming cured. With faith, with a little practice, it can be done, it is being done, daily, in the Far East.

“It is useful to place one hand in imagination on the back of the person’s neck, and the other hand on or over the afflicted part. You will have to pray to yourself in groups of three prayers a number of times each day until you get the desired results. Again, if you believe, you will get results. But let me issue a grave, grave warning. You cannot increase your own fortune in this way. There is a very ancient occult law which stops one from profiting from prayers for self gain. You cannot do it for yourself unless it is to help others, and unless you sincerely believe that it will help others. I know of an actual case wherein a man who had a moderate income and was fairly comfortably off, thought that if he won the Irish Sweepstake he would help others; he would be a great benefactor of mankind.

“Knowing a little, but not enough, of esoteric matters, he made great plans of what he would do.

He set out with a carefully prepared program of prayers. He prayed along the lines set out in this chapter for two months; he prayed that he would pick the winner of the Irish Sweepstake. For two months he prayed in groups of three prayers, three times a day—nine prayers in all during the day. As he fully anticipated, he won the Irish Sweepstake, and he won one of the biggest prizes of them all.

“Eventually he had the money and it went to his head. He forgot all about his good intentions, all about his promises. He forgot all about everything except that he had this vast sum of money and he could now do exactly as he wanted to do. He devoted the money to his own self gratification. For a very few months he had a wonderful time, during which he became harder and harder, and then the inexorable law came into force, and instead of keeping that money and helping others, he lost everything that he had gained, and everything that he had before. In the end he died and was buried in a pauper’s grave.

“I say to you that if you use the power of prayer properly, without thought of self gain, without thought of self aggrandizement, then you have tapped one of the greatest powers on Earth, a force so great that if just a few genuine people got together and prayed for peace, then there would be peace, and wars and thoughts of wars would be no more.”

For some time after there was silence as they digested what I had told

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them, then the woman said, "I wish you would stay here awhile and teach us! We have seen a miracle, but Someone came and told us not to talk about it."

I rested for a few hours, then dressed and wrote a letter to my official friends in Shanghai, telling them what had happened to my papers. By airmail they sent me a fresh Passport which certainly eased my position. By airmail there arrived a letter from a very rich woman. "For some time," she wrote, "I have been trying to find your address. My daughter, whom you saved from the Japanese, is now with me and is completely restored to health. You saved her from rape and worse, and I want to repay, at least in part, our debt to you. Tell me what I can do for you."

I wrote to her and told her that I wanted to go home to Tibet to die. "I have enough money to buy a ticket to a port in India," I replied, "but not enough to cross that continent. If you really want to help me, buy me a ticket from Bombay to Kalimpong in India." I treated it as a joke, but two weeks later I received a letter and first class sea ticket and first class rail tickets all the way to Kalimpong. Immediately I wrote to her and expressed my gratitude, telling her that I intended giving my other money to the Negro family who had so befriended me.

The Negro family were sad that I was going to leave, but overjoyed that for once in my life I was going to have a comfortable journey. It was so difficult to get them to accept money. In the end we shared it between us! "There is one thing," said the friendly Negro women. "You knew this money would come as it was for a good purpose. Did you send what you called a 'thought form' for it?"

"No," I answered, "it must have been accomplished by a source far removed from this world."

She looked puzzled. "You said that you would tell us about thought forms before you left. Will you have time now?"

"Yes," I replied. "Sit down, and I will tell you a story."

She sat and folded her hands. Her husband turned out the light and sat back in his chair as I began to speak: "By the burning sands, amid the gray stone buildings with the glaring sun overhead, the small group of men wended their way through the narrow streets. After a few minutes they stopped at a shabby-looking doorway, knocked and entered. A few muttered sentences were uttered, and then the men were handed torches which spluttered and sent drops of resin around. Slowly they made their way through corridors, getting lower and lower into the sands of Egypt. The atmosphere was cloying, sickly. It seeped into the nostrils, nauseating by the manner in which it clung to

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the mucous membrane.

“There was hardly a glimmer of light here except that which came from the torch bearers, the torch bearers who moved along at the head of the small procession. As they went further into the underground chamber the smell became stronger, the smell of Frankincense, of Myrrh, and of strange exotic herbs from the Orient. There was also the odor of death, of decay, and of decaying vegetation.

“Against the far wall was a collection of canopic jars containing the hearts and entrails of the people who were being embalmed. They were carefully labeled with the exact contents and with the date of sealing. These the procession passed with hardly a shudder, and went on past the baths of Nitre in which bodies were immersed for ninety days. Even now bodies were floating in these baths, and every so often an attendant would come along and push the body under with a long pole and turn it over. With scarcely a glance at these floating bodies, the procession went on into the inner chamber. There, resting upon planks of sweet smelling wood, was the body of the dead Pharaoh, wrapped tightly with linen bandages, powdered well with sweet smelling herbs, and anointed with unguents.

“The men entered, and four bearers took the body and turned it about; and put it in a light wooden shell which had been standing against a wall. Then, raising it to shoulder height, they turned and followed the torch bearers out of the underground room, past the baths of nitre, out of the rooms of the embalmers of Egypt. Nearer the surface the body was taken to another room where dim daylight filtered in. Here it was taken out of the crude wooden shell and placed in another one the exact shape of the body. The hands were placed across the breast and tightly bound with bandages. A papyrus was tied to them giving the history of the dead man.

“Here, days later, the priests of Osiris, of Isis, and of Horus came. Here they chanted their preliminary prayers conducting the soul through the Underworld. Here, too, the sorcerers and the magicians of old Egypt prepared their Thought Forms, Thought Forms which would guard the body of the dead man and prevent vandals from breaking into the tomb and disturbing his peace.

“Throughout the land of Egypt were proclamations of the penalties which would befall any who violated the tomb. The sentence: first the tongue of the violator would be torn out, and then his hands would be severed at the wrists. A few days later he would be disemboweled, and buried to the neck in the hot sand where he would live out the few short hours of life.

“The tomb of Tutankhamen made history because of the curse which fell

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upon those who violated that tomb. All the people who entered the tomb of Tutankhamen died or suffered mysterious, incurable illnesses.

“The priests of Egypt had a science which had been lost to the present-day world, the science of creating Thought Forms to do tasks which are beyond the skill of the human body. But that science need not have been lost, because anyone with a little practice, with a little perseverance, can make a thought form which will act for good or for bad.

“Who was the poet who wrote: ‘I am the captain of my soul’? That man uttered a great truth, perhaps greater than he knew, for Man is indeed the captain of his soul. Western people have contemplated material things, mechanical things, anything to do with the mundane world. They have tried to explore Space, but they have failed to explore the deepest mystery of all: the subconsciousness of Man, for Man is nine-tenths subconscious, which means that only one-tenth of Man is conscious. Only one-tenth of man’s potential is subject to his volitional commands. If a man can be one and one-half tenths conscious, then that man is a genius, but geniuses upon Earth are geniuses in one direction only. Often they are very deficient in other lines.

“The Egyptians in the days of the Pharaohs well knew the power of the subconscious. They buried their Pharaohs in deep tombs, and with their arts, with their knowledge of humanity, they made spells. They made Thought Forms which guarded the tombs of the dead Pharaohs and prevented intruders from entering, under penalty of dire disease.

“But you can make Thought Forms which will do good, but make sure they are for good because a Thought Form cannot tell good from evil. It will do either but the evil Thought Form in the end will wreak vengeance on its creator.

“The story of Aladdin is actually the story of a Thought Form which was conjured up. It is based upon one of the old Chinese legends, legends which are literally true.

“Imagination is the greatest force upon Earth. Imagination, unfortunately, is badly named. If one uses the word ‘imagination’ one automatically thinks of a frustrated person given to neurotic tendencies, and yet nothing could be further from the truth. All great artists, all great painters, great writers too, have to have a brilliant, controlled imagination, otherwise they could not visualize the finished thing that they are attempting to create.

“If we in everyday life would harness imagination, then we could achieve what we now regard as miracles. We may, for example, have a loved one who is suffering from some illness, some illness for which as yet medical science

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has no cure. That person can be cured if one makes a Thought Form which will get in touch with the Overself of the sick person, and help that Overself to materialize to create new parts. Thus, a person who is suffering from a diabetic condition could, with proper help, re-create the damaged parts of the pancreas which caused the disease.

“How can we create a Thought Form? Well, it is easy. We will go into that now. One must first decide what one wants to accomplish, and be sure that it is for good. Then one must call the imagination into play, one must visualize exactly the result which one wants to achieve. Supposing a person is ill with an organ invaded by disease. If we are going to make a Thought Form which will help, we must exactly visualize that person standing before us. We must try to visualize the afflicted organ. Having the afflicted organ pictorially before us, we must visualize it gradually healing, and we must impart a positive affirmation. So, we make this Thought Form by visualizing the person, we imagine the Thought Form standing beside the afflicted person and with supernormal powers reaching inside the body of that sick person, and with a healing touch causing the disease to disappear.

“At all times we must speak to the Thought Form which we have created in a firm, positive voice. There must not at any time be any suspicion of negativeness, or of indecision. We must speak in the simplest possible language and in the most direct manner possible. We must speak to it as we would speak to a very backward child, because this Thought Form has no reason and can accept only a direct command or a simple statement.

“There may be a sore on some organ, and we must say to that Thought Form: ‘You will now heal such-and-such an organ. The tissue is knitting together.’ You would have to repeat that several times daily, and if you visualize your Thought Form actually going to work, then it will indeed go to work. It worked with the Egyptians, and it can work with present-day people.

“There are many authenticated instances of tombs being haunted by a shadowy figure. That is because either the dead persons, or others, have thought so hard that they have actually made a figure of ectoplasm. The Egyptians in the days of the Pharaohs buried the embalmed body of the Pharaoh, but they adopted extreme measures so that their Thought Forms would be vivified even after thousands of years. They slew slaves slowly, painfully, telling the slaves that they would get relief from pain in the after-world if in dying they provided the necessary substance with which to make a substantial Thought Form. Archaeological records have long substantiated hauntings and curses in tombs, and all these things are merely the outcome of absolutely natural, absolutely normal laws.

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“Thought Forms can be made by anyone at all with just a little practice, but you must first at all times concentrate upon good in your Thought Forms because if you try to make an evil form, then assuredly that Thought Form will turn upon you and cause you the gravest harm perhaps in the physical, in the mental, or in the astral state.”

The next few days were frantic ones, transit visas to obtain, final preparations to be made, and things to be packed up and sent back to friends in Shanghai. My crystal was carefully packed and returned there for my future use, as were my Chinese papers, papers which, incidentally, quite a number of responsible people have now seen.

My personal possessions I kept to the absolute minimum, consisting of one suit of clothing and the necessary change of underwear. Now trusting no officials, I had photographic copies made of everything, passport, tickets, medical certificates and all! “Are you coming to see me off?” I asked my Negro friends.

“No,” they replied. “We should not be allowed near because of the color bar!”

The final day arrived, and I went by bus to the docks. Carrying my small case, and presenting my ticket, I was confronted with a demand as to the whereabouts of the rest of my luggage. “This is all,” I replied. “I am taking nothing more.”

The Official was plainly puzzled and suspicious. “Wait here,” he muttered, and hurried off to an inner office. Several minutes later he came out accompanied by a more senior official. “Is this all your luggage, sir?” the new man asked.

“It is,” I replied.

He frowned, looked at my tickets, checked the details against entries in a book, and then stalked off with my tickets and the book. Ten minutes later he came back looking very disturbed. Handing me my tickets and some other papers, he said, “This is very irregular, all the way to India and no luggage!” Shaking his head he turned away. The former clerk apparently had decided to wash his hands of the whole affair, for he turned away and would not answer when I asked the location of the ship. Finally I looked at the new papers in my hand and saw that one was a Boarding Card giving all the required details.

It was a long walk to the ship’s side and when I reached it I saw policemen lounging about but carefully watching passengers. I walked forward, showed my ticket and walked up the gangplank. An hour or so later two men

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came to my cabin and asked why I had no luggage. "But my dear man," I said, "I thought this was the land of the free? Why should I be encumbered with luggage? What I take is my own affair, surely?"

He muttered and mumbled, and fiddled with papers and said, "Well, we have to make sure that everything is all right. The clerk thought you were trying to escape from justice as you had no luggage. He was only trying to make sure."

I pointed to my case. "All I need is there; it will get me to India; in India I can pick up other luggage."

He looked relieved, "Ah! So you have other luggage, in India? Then that is all right."

I smiled to myself as I thought, "The only time I have trouble in entering or leaving a country is when I do it legally, when I have all the papers Red Tape demands."

Life aboard the ship was dull, the other passengers were very class conscious and the story that I had brought "only one case!" apparently put me outside the range of human society. Because I did not conform to the snobbish norm I was as lonely as if I had been in a prison cell, but with the great difference that I could move about. It was amusing to see other passengers call a steward to have their deck-chairs moved a little further away from me.

We sailed from the port of New York to the Straits of Gibraltar. Across the Mediterranean Sea we steamed, calling at Alexandria, and then going on to Port Said, steaming along the Suez Canal to enter the Red Sea. The heat affected me badly, the Red Sea was almost steaming, but at last it came to an end, and we crossed the Arabian Sea to finally dock at Bombay. I had a few friends in that city, Buddhist priests and others, and I spent a week in their company before continuing my journey across India to Kalimpong. Kalimpong was full of Communist spies and newspaper men. New arrivals found their life was made a misery by the endless, senseless questioning, questions which I never answered but continued what I was doing. This penchant of Western people to pry into the affairs of others was a complete mystery to me, I really did not understand it.

I was glad to get out of Kalimpong and move into my own country, Tibet. I had been expected, and was met by a party of high lamas disguised as mendicant monks and traders. My health was deteriorating rapidly, and necessitated frequent stops and rest. At long last, some ten weeks later, we reached a secluded lamasery high in the Himalayas, overlooking the Valley of Lhasa, a lamasery so small and so inaccessible that Chinese Communists would not

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bother about it.

For some days I rested, trying to regain a little of my strength, rested, and meditated. I was home now, and happy for the first time in years. The deceptions and treachery of Western peoples seemed to be no more than an evil nightmare. Daily, little groups of men came to me, to tell me of events in Tibet, and to listen to me while I told them of the strange harsh world outside our frontiers.

I attended all the Services, finding comfort and solace in the familiar rituals. Yet I was a man apart, a man who was about to die and live again. A man who was about to undergo one of the strangest experiences to fall to the lot of a living creature. Yet was it so strange? Many of our higher Adepts did it for life after life. The Dalai Lama himself did it, time after time taking over the body of a newborn baby. But the difference was, I was going to take over the body of an adult, and mould his body to mine, changing molecule by molecule the complete body, not just the ego. Although not a Christian, my studies at Lhasa had required me to read the Christian Bible and listen to lectures on it. I knew that in the Bible it was stated that the body of Jesus, the Son of Mary and Joseph, was taken over by the "Spirit of the Son of God" and became Christ.

I knew too that the Christian priests had had a Convention in the year sixty (A.D.) to ban certain teachings of Christ. Reincarnation was banned, the taking over of the body of others was banned, together with many, many matters taught by Christ.

I looked out of my glassless window at the city of Lhasa so far below. It was hard to realize that the hated Communists were in charge there. So far they were trying to win over the young Tibetans by wonderful promises. We called it "The honey on the knife", the more one licked the "honey" the sooner was the sharp blade revealed. Chinese troops stood on guard at the Pargo Kaling, Chinese troops stood at the entrances to our temples, like pickets at a Western-world strike, stood jeering at our ancient religion. Monks were being insulted, even manhandled, and the illiterate peasants and herdsmen were encouraged to do likewise.

Here we were safe from the Communists, safe in this almost unclimbable precipice. About us the whole area was honeycombed with caves, and there was but one precipitous path winding round the very edge of the cliffs, with a sheer drop of more than two thousand feet for those who slipped. Here, when venturing out in the open, we used gray robes which blended with the rock face. Grey robes which concealed us from the chance gaze of the Chinese using binoculars.

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Far off I could see Chinese specialists with theodolites and measuring sticks. They crawled about like ants, placing pegs into the ground, making entries in their books. A monk crossed in front of a soldier, the Chinese jabbed at the monk's leg with his bayonet. Through the twenty magnification binoculars—my one luxury—which I had brought, I could see the spurt of blood and the sadistic grin on the face of the Chinese. These glasses were good, revealing the proud Potala and my own Chakpori. Something nagged at the back of my mind, something was missing. I refocused the binoculars and looked again. Upon the waters of the Serpent Temple Lake nothing stirred. In the streets of Lhasa no dogs nuzzled among refuse piles. No wild fowl, no dogs! I turned to the monk at my side.

"The Communists had them all killed for food. Dogs do not work, therefore they shall not eat, said the Communists, but they shall do one service in providing food. It is now an offence to have a dog or a cat or a pet of any kind."

I looked in horror at the monk. An offence to keep a pet! Instinctively I looked again at the Chakpori. "What happened to our cats there?" I asked.

"Killed and eaten," was the reply.

I sighed and thought, "Oh! If I could tell people the truth about Communism, how they really treat people. If only the Westerners were not so squeamish!" I thought of the community of nuns of whom I had heard so recently from a high lama who, upon his journey, had come across a lone survivor and heard her story before she died in his arms. Her community of nuns, she told him, had been invaded by a wild band of Chinese soldiers.

They had desecrated the Sacred Objects and stolen all that there was of value. The aged Superior, they had stripped and rubbed her with butter. Then they had set her alight and laughed and shouted with joy at her screams. At last her poor blackened body lay still upon the ground, and a soldier drew his bayonet the length of her body to make sure that she was dead.

Old nuns were stripped and had red hot irons thrust into them so that they died in agony. Younger nuns were raped in front of each other, each being raped some twenty or thirty times during the three days that the soldiers stayed. Then they tired of the "sport", or were exhausted, for they turned upon the women in a last frenzy of savagery. Some women had parts cut off, some were slit open. Yet others were driven, still naked, out into the bitter cold.

A little party of monks who were traveling to Lhasa had come upon them and had tried to help them, giving the women their own robes, trying to keep the feeble light of life flickering. The Chinese Communist soldiers, also on the way to Lhasa, had come upon them and had treated the monks with such sav-

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age brutality that such things could not be put into print. The monks, mutilated beyond hope of saving, had been turned loose, naked, bleeding, until they died from loss of blood. One woman alone had survived; she had fallen in a ditch and had been hidden by prayer flags which the Chinese had ripped from their posts. At long last, the lama and his attendant acolyte had come upon the gruesome scene and together had heard the full tale from the nun's dying lips.

"Oh! To tell the Western world of the terrors of Communism," I thought, but as I was later to find, to my cost, one cannot write or talk of the truth in the West. All horrors must be smoothed over, all must have a patina of "decency." Are the Communists "decent" when they rape, mutilate, and kill? If the people of the West would listen to the true accounts of those who have suffered, they would indeed save themselves such horrors, for Communism is insidious, like cancer, and while people are prepared to think that this dreadful cult is merely different politics, then there is danger indeed for the peoples of the world. As one who has suffered, I would say— show people in print and pictures (no matter how dreadful) what goes on behind these "Iron Curtains".

While I was ruminating upon these things, and spasmodically scanning the landscape before me, an aged man, bent and walking with a stick, entered my room. His face was lined with much suffering, and his bones stood out prominently, covered only by parchment-tight, withered skin. I saw that he was sightless and I rose to take his arm. His eye-sockets glared as angry red holes, and his movements were uncertain, as are those of the recently blinded. I sat him by me, and gently held his hand, thinking that here in this invaded land we had nothing now with which to alleviate his suffering and ease the pain of those inflamed sockets.

He smiled patiently and said, "You are wondering about my eyes, Brother. I was upon the Holy Way, making my prostrations at a Shrine. As I rose to my feet I gazed upon the Potala, and by a mischance a Chinese officer was in my line of sight. He charged that I was gazing upon him arrogantly, that I was looking at him offensively. I was tied by a rope to the end of his car and dragged along the ground to the square. There spectators were rounded up, and in front of them my eyes were gouged out and thrown at me. My body, as you can surely see, has many half healed wounds. I was brought here by others and now I am glad to greet you."

I gasped with horror as he pulled open his robe, for his body was a raw red mass through being dragged along the road. I well knew this man. Under him, as an Acolyte, I had studied things of the mind. I had known him when I became a lama, for he had been one of my sponsors. He had been one of the lamas when I had journeyed far down beneath the Potala to endure the Cer-

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emony of the Little Death. Now he sat beside me, and I knew that his death was not far off.

“You have traveled far and have seen and endured much,” he said. “Now my last task in this Incarnation is to help you obtain glimpses, through the Akashic Record, of the life of a certain Englishman who is most anxious to depart his body that you may take over. You will have glimpses only, for it takes much energy and we are both low in strength.” He paused, and then, with a faint smile on his face, continued, “The effort will finish this present life of mine, and I am glad to have this opportunity of acquiring merit through this last task. Thank you, Brother, for making it possible. When you return here from the Astral Journey, I shall be dead beside you.”

The Akashic Record! What a wonderful source of knowledge that was. What a tragedy that people did not investigate its possibilities instead of meddling with atom bombs. Everything we do, everything that happens, is indelibly impressed upon the Akasha, that subtle medium which interpenetrates all matter. Every movement which has taken place on Earth since Earth first was, is available for those with the necessary training. To those with their “eyes” open, the history of the world lies before them.

An old prediction says that after the end of this century scientists will be able to use the Akashic Record to look into history. It would be interesting to know what Cleopatra really said to Anthony, and what Mr. Gladstone’s famous remarks were. To me it would be delightful to see my critics’ faces when they saw what asses they really are, when they had to admit that I wrote the truth after all, but, sad to say, none of us will be here then.

But this Akashic Record, can we explain it more clearly? Everything that happens “impresses” itself upon that medium which interpenetrates even air. Once a sound has been made, or an action initiated, it is there for all time.

With suitable instruments anyone could see it. Look at it in terms of light, or the vibrations which we call light and sight. Light travels at a certain speed. As every scientist knows, we see stars at night which may no longer be in existence. Some of those stars are so very far away that the light from them which is now reaching us may have started on its journey before this Earth came into being. We have no way of knowing if the star died a million or so years ago because the light would still reach us for perhaps a million more years. It might be easier to remind one of sound. We see the flash of lightning and hear the sound some time later. It is the slowness of sound which makes for the delay in hearing it after seeing the flash. It is the slowness of light which may make possible an instrument for “seeing” the past.

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If we could move instantly to a planet so far distant that it took light one year to reach it from the planet which we had just left, we would see light which had started out one year before us. If we had some, as yet imaginary, super-powerful, supersensitive telescope with which we could focus on any part of the Earth, we would see events on Earth which were a year old. Given the ability to move with our super telescope to a planet so far distant that the light from Earth took one million years to reach it, we should then be able to see Earth as it was one million years ago. By moving further and further, instantly, of course, we should eventually reach a point from which we would be able to see the birth of Earth, or even the sun.

The Akashic Record enables us to do just that. By special training we can move into the astral world where Time and Space do not exist and where other "dimensions" take over. Then one sees all. Other Time and Space? Well, as a simple example, suppose one had a mile of thin thread, sewing cotton if you like. One has to move from one side to the other. As things are on Earth we cannot move through the cotton, or around its circumference. One has to travel all along the surface to the end a mile away, and back the other side, another mile. The journey is long. In the astral we should just move through.

A very simple example, but moving through the Akashic Record is as simple, when one knows how! The Akashic Record cannot be used for wrong purposes, it cannot be used to gain information which would harm another. Nor without special dispensation, could one see and afterwards discuss the private affairs of a person. One can, of course, see and discuss those things which are properly the affairs of history. Now I was going to see glimpses of the private life of another, and then I had to finally decide; should I take over this other body to substitute for mine? Mine was failing rapidly, and to accomplish my allotted task, I had to have a body to "tide me over" until I could change its molecules to mine. I settled myself, and waited for the blind lama to speak.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

Slowly the sun sank behind the distant mountain range, outlining the high peaks in the late effulgence. The faint spume streaming from the towering pinnacles caught the fading light and reflected a myriad of hues which changed and fluctuated with the vagaries of the soft evening breeze.

Deep purple shadows stole from the hollows like creatures of the night coming out to play. Gradually the velvet darkness crept up along the base of the Potala, climbing ever higher, until only the golden roofs reflected a last gleam before they too were submerged in the encroaching darkness. One by one little glimmers of light appeared, like living jewels placed upon blackness for greater display.

The mountainous wall of the Valley stood out hard and austere, with the light behind it diminishing in intensity. Here, in our rocky home, we caught a last glimpse of the declining sun as it illuminated a rocky pass. Then we too were in darkness. No light for us, we were denied all for fear of betraying our sanctuary. For us there was naught but the darkness of the night and the darkness of our thoughts as we gazed upon our treacherously invaded land.

"Brother," said the blind lama, whose presence I had almost forgotten while thinking my own unhappy thoughts.

"Brother, shall we go?" Together we sat in the lotus position and meditated upon that which we were going to do. The gentle night wind moaned softly in ecstasy as it played around the crags and pinnacles of rock and whispered in our window. With the not unpleasing jerk which so often accompanies such release, the blind lama—now blind no longer—and I soared from our earthly bodies into the freedom of another plane.

"It is good to see again," said the lama, "for one treasures one's sight only when it is gone." We floated along together, along the familiar path to that

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place which we termed the Hall of Memories. Entering in silence, we saw that others were engaged in research into the Akashic but what they saw was invisible to us, as our own scenes would be invisible to them.

“Where shall we start, Brother?” said the old lama.

“We do not want to intrude,” I replied, “but we should see what sort of a man with whom we deal.”

For a while there was silence between us as pictures sharp and clear formed for us to see. “Eek!” I exclaimed jumping up in alarm. “He is married. What can I do about that? I am a celibate monk! I am getting out of this.” I turned in great alarm and was stopped by the sight of the old man fairly shaking with laughter. For a time his mirth was so great that he simply could not speak.

“Brother, Lobsang,” he managed to say at last, “you have greatly enlivened my declining days. I thought at first that the whole hierarchy of devils had bitten you as you sat, you jumped so high. Now, Brother, there is no problem at all, but first let me have a friendly ‘dig’ at you. You were telling me of the West, and of their strange beliefs. Let me quote you this, from their own Bible: ‘Marriage is honorable in all’ (Hebrews, Chapter Thirteen, Verse Four).” Once again he was attacked by a fit of laughter, and the more glumly I looked at him, the more he laughed, until in the end he stopped from exhaustion.

“Brother,” he continued, when he was able, “those who guide us and help us had that in mind. You and the lady may live together in a state of companionship, for do not our own monks and nuns live at times under the same roof? Let us not see difficulties where none exist. Let us continue with the Record.”

With a heartfelt sigh, I nodded dumbly. Words for the moment were quite beyond me. The more I thought of it all, the less I liked any of it. I thought of my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, sitting in comfort somewhere up in the Land of the Golden Light. My expression must have become blacker and blacker, for the old lama started laughing again.

At last we both calmed down and together watched the living pictures of the Akashic Record. I saw the man whose body it was hoped I would take. With increasing interest I observed that he was doing surgical fitting. To my delight it was obvious that he certainly knew what he was doing, he was a competent technician, and I nodded in involuntary approval as I watched him deal with case after case.

The scene moved on and we were able to see the city of London, in England, just as if we mingled with the crowds there. The huge red buses roared

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along the streets, weaving in and out of traffic and carrying great loads of people. A hellish shrieking and wailing broke out and we saw people dart for shelter in strange stone buildings erected in the streets. There was the incessant “crump-crump” of antiaircraft shells and fighters droned across the sky. Instinctively we ducked as bombs fell from one of the planes and whistled down. For a moment there was a hushed silence, and then whoom! Buildings leaped into the air and came down as dust and rubble.

Down in the deep subways of the underground railways, people were living a strange, troglodytic existence, going to the shelters at night, and emerging like moles in the morning. Whole families apparently lived there, sleeping upon makeshift bunks, and trying to obtain a little privacy by draping blankets from any available protrusion in the smooth tiled walls.

I seemed to be standing on an iron platform high above the roof tops of London, with a clear view across to the building which people called “The Palace.” A lone plane dived from the clouds, and three bombs sped down to the home of the King of England. I looked about me. When seeing through the Akashic Record one “sees” as did the principal character, so the old lama and I both saw as if both of us were the chief figure. It seemed to me that I was standing on a fire escape stretching across the roof tops of London. I had seen such things before, but I had to explain the use of it to my companion. Then it dawned on me, he—the figure I was watching—was doing aircraft spotting in order to give warning to those below if imminent danger should threaten. The sirens sounded again, the All Clear, and I saw the man climb down and remove his Air Raid Warden’s steel helmet.

The old lama turned to me with a smile, “This is most interesting, I have not watched events in the Occident, my interests have been confined to our own country. I now understand what you mean when you say that ‘one picture is worth a thousand words’. We must look again.”

As we sat and watched the Record we saw the streets of London blacked out, with motor cars fitted with special headlamp shields. People bumped into posts and into each other. Inside the subway trains, before they came to the surface, the ordinary lights were switched off, and dismal blue bulbs were switched on. The beams of searchlights probed into the night sky, sometimes illuminating the gray sides of the barrage balloons. The old lama looked at the balloons in absolute fascination. Astral traveling he well understood, but these gray monsters, tethered on high, shifting restlessly in the night wind really amazed him. I confess that I found my companion’s expression as interesting as the Akashic Record.

We watched the man get out of the train and walk along the darkened

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streets until he reached a large block of flats. We watched him enter, but did not enter with him; instead we looked at the busy scene outside. Houses were wrecked by bombs, and men were still digging in order to recover the living and the dead. The wail of the sirens interrupted rescue operations. Far up, like moths fluttering in the lamplight, enemy bombers were caught in a crisscross of searchlight beams. Glinting light from one of the bombers attracted our curious gaze, and then we saw that the "lights" were the bombs on their way down. One dropped with a "crump" into the side of the big block of flats. There was a vivid flash and a shower of shattered masonry. People came pouring out of the building, came out into the doubtful safety of the streets.

"You have had worse than this, my Brother, in Shanghai?" asked the old lama.

"Much worse," I replied. "We had no defenses and scant facilities. As you know, I was buried for a time in a wrecked shelter there, and escaped only with great difficulty."

"Shall we move on a little in time," asked my companion. We do not need to watch endlessly for we are both enfeebled in health."

I agreed with the utmost alacrity. I merely needed to know what sort of person it was from whom I was going to take over. For me there was no interest whatever in prying into the affairs of another. We moved along the Record, halted experimentally, and moved on again. The morning light was besmirched by the smoke of many fires. The night hours had been an inferno. It seemed that half London was ablaze. The man walked down the debris-littered street, a street that had been heavily bombed. At a temporary barricade a War Reserve policeman stopped him.

"You cannot go any farther, sir, the buildings are dangerous." We saw the Managing Director arrive and speak to the man whose life we were watching. With a word to the policeman, they ducked under the rope and walked together to the shattered building. Water was spraying over all the stock from broken pipes. Plumbing and electric wires were inextricably entwined, like a skein of wool with which a kitten had played. A safe hung at a precarious angle still teetering on the very edge of a large hole. Sodden rags flapped miserably in the breeze, and from adjacent buildings flecks of burnt paper floated down like flakes of coal-black snow. I who had seen more of war and suffering than most, was still sickened by the senseless destruction. The Record went on . . .

Unemployment, in wartime London! The man tried to enlist as a War Reserve Policeman. Tried in vain. His medical papers were marked Grade Four, unfit for service. Now, with his employment gone, through the dropping of the

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bomb, he walked the streets in search of work. Firm after firm refused to take him. There seemed to be no hope, nothing to lighten the darkness of his hard times.

At last, through a chance visit to a Correspondence School with whom he had studied, and impressed them with his mental alertness and industry, he was offered employment at their wartime offices outside London. "It is a beautiful place," said the man who made the offer.

"Go down on the Green Line bus. See Joe, he should be there by one, but the others will look after you. Take the Missus for the trip. I've been trying to get shifted there myself." The village was indeed a dump! Not the "beautiful place" he had been led to suppose. Aircraft were made there, tested, and flown to other parts of the country.

Life in a Correspondence College was boring indeed. So far as we could see, watching the Akashic Record, it consisted of reading forms and letters from people and then suggesting what Course of postal instruction they should take. My own personal opinion was that correspondence teaching was a waste of money unless one had facilities for practical work as well.

A strange noise like a faulty motorcycle engine came to our ears. As we watched, a peculiar aeroplane came into view, a plane with no pilot or crew. It gave a spasmodic cough and the engine cut, the plane dived and exploded just above the ground. "That was the German robot plane," I said to the old lama, "The V.1 and the V.2 seem to have been unpleasant affairs." Another robot plane came over near the house in which the man and his wife lived. It blew windows in at one side of the house, and out at the other side and cracked a wall.

"They do not appear to have many friends," said the old lama. "I think they have possibilities of the mind which the casual observer would overlook. It seems to me that they live together more as brother and sister than as husband and wife. That should comfort you, my Brother!" the old man said with quite a chuckle.

The Akashic Record went on, portraying a man's life at the speed of thought. We could yet move from one portion to another, ignoring certain parts or seeing other incidents time after time. The man found that a series of coincidences occurred which turned his thoughts more and more to the East. "Dreams" showed him life in Tibet, dreams which really were astral traveling trips under the control of the old lama. "One of our very minor difficulties," the old man told me, "was that he wanted to use the word 'master' whenever he spoke to one of us."

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“Oh!” I replied, “that is one of the common mistakes of the Western people, they love to use any name which implies power over others. What did you tell him?”

The old lama smiled and said, “I gave him a little talk, I also tried to get him to ask less questions. I will tell you what I said, because it is of use in deducing his inner nature. I said: That is a term which is most abhorrent to me and to all Easterners. ‘Master’ infers that one is seeking domination over others, seeking supremacy over those who have no right to use ‘master’. A school master endeavors to inculcate learning in his pupils. To us ‘Master’ means Master of Knowledge, a source of knowledge, or one who has mastered the temptations of the flesh. We, I told him, prefer the word Guru, or Adept. For no Master, as we know the word, would ever seek to influence a student or to impose his own opinions. In the West certain little groups and cults there are who think that they alone have the key to the Heavenly Fields. Certain religions used tortures in order to gain converts. I reminded him of a carving over one of our lamaseries: ‘a thousand monks, a thousand religions’.

“He seemed to follow my talk very well,” said the old lama, “so I gave him a little more with the idea of striking while the iron was hot. I said: In India, in China, and in old Japan, the student-to-be will sit at the feet of his Guru seeking information, not asking questions, for the wise student never asks questions lest he be sent away. To ask a question is proof positive to the Guru that the student is not yet ready to receive answers to his questions. Some students have waited as long as seven years for information, for the answer to an unspoken question. During this time the student tends the bodily wants of the Guru, attends to his clothing, to his food, and to the few other needs that he has. All the time his ears are alive for information, because by receiving information, perhaps hearing that which is being given to other people, the wise student can deduce, can infer, and when the Guru in his wisdom sees that the student is making progress, that Guru, in his own good time, and in his own suitable way, questions the student, and if he finds some of the pupil’s accumulated store of knowledge is faulty or incomplete, then the Guru, again in his own good time, repairs the omissions and deficiencies.

“In the West people say, ‘Now, tell me this. Madame Blavatsky said, Bishop Ledbetter says, Billy Graham says, What do you say? I think you are wrong!’ Westerners ask questions for the sake of talk, they ask questions not knowing what they want to say, not knowing what they want to hear, but when perhaps a kindly Guru answers a question, the student immediately argues and says, ‘Oh well, I heard so-and-so say this, or that, or something else.’

“If the student asks a Guru a question, it must imply that the student does

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not know the answer, but considers that the Guru does, and if the student immediately questions the answer of the Guru, it shows that the student is ignorant and has preconceived and utterly erroneous ideas of decorum and of ordinary common decency. I say to you that the only way to obtain answers to your questions is, leave your questions unasked and collect information, deduce and infer, then in the fullness of time, provided you are pure in heart, you will be able to do astral traveling and the more esoteric forms of meditation, and will thus be enabled to consult the Akashic Record which cannot lie, cannot answer out of context, and cannot give an opinion or information colored by personal bias. The human sponge suffers from mental indigestion and sadly retards his or her evolution and spiritual development. The only way to progress? That is to wait and see. There is no other way, there is no way of forcing your development except at the express invitation of a Guru who knows you well, and that Guru, knowing you well, would soon speed your development if he thought that you were worthy."

It seemed to me that most Westerners would benefit by being taught that! But we were not here to teach, but to watch the unfolding of vital scenes from a man's life, a man who would shortly vacate his earthly shell.

"This is interesting," said the old lama, drawing my attention to a scene on the Record. "This took much arranging, but when he saw the desirability of it, he made no demur."

I looked at the scene in some puzzlement, then it dawned upon me. Yes! That was a solicitor's office. That paper was a Change of Name Deed Poll. Yes, that was correct, I remembered, he had changed his name because that which he had had previously had the wrong vibrations as indicated by our Science of Numbers. I read the document with interest and saw that it was not quite correct, although it was near enough.

Of suffering there was plenty. A visit to a dentist caused much damage, damage which necessitated his removal to a nursing home for an operation. Out of technical interest, I watched the proceedings with considerable care. He—the man whose life we were watching—felt that the employer was uncaring. We, watching, felt the same, and the old lama and I were glad the man gave notice of the termination of his engagement in the postal training school.

The furniture was loaded on a van, some of it was sold, and the man and his wife left the area for an entirely fresh district. For a time they lived in the house of a strange old woman who "told fortunes," and had an amazing idea of her own importance. The man tried and tried to obtain employment. Anything which would enable him to earn money honestly.

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The old lama said, "Now we are approaching the crucial part. As you will observe, he rails against fate constantly. He has no patience and I am afraid that he will depart his life violently unless we hurry."

"What do you wish me to do?" I asked.

"You are the senior," said the old man, "but I would like you to meet him in the astral, and see what you think."

"Certainly," was my rejoinder, "We will go together."

For a moment I was lost in thought, then I said, "In Lhasa it is two o'clock in the morning. In England it will be eight o'clock in the evening, for their time lags behind ours. We will wait and rest for three hours, and will then draw him over to the astral."

"Yes," said the old lama. He sleeps in a room alone, so we can do it. For the present let us rest, for we are weary."

We returned to our bodies, sitting side by side in the faint starlight. The lights of Lhasa were extinguished now, and the only glimmers came from the habitations of monks and the brighter lights from Chinese Communist guard posts. The tinkling of the little stream outside our walls sounded unnaturally loud against the silence of the night.

From high above came the rattling of a small shower of pebbles dislodged by the higher wind. They rattled and bounced by us, jarring loose bigger stones. Down the mountainside they rushed, to end in a noisy heap by a Chinese barracks. Lights flashed on, rifles were discharged into the air, and soldiers ran wildly around, fearing attack from the monks of Lhasa. The commotion soon subsided, and the night was peaceful and still once again.

The old lama laughed softly, and said, "How strange to me that the people beyond our land cannot understand astral traveling! How strange that they think all this is imagination. Could it not be put to them that even changing one's body for that of another is merely like a driver changing from one automobile to another? It seems inconceivable that a people with their technical progress should be so blind to the things of the spirit."

I, with much experience of the West, replied, "But Western people, except for a very small minority, have not the capacity for spiritual things. All they want is war, sex, sadism, and the right to pry into the affairs of others."

The long night wore on; we rested and refreshed ourselves with tea and tsampa. At last the first faint streaks of light shot across the mountain range behind us. As yet the valley at our feet was immersed in darkness. Somewhere

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a yak began to bellow as if sensing that a new day would soon be upon us. Five in the morning Tibetan time. About eleven o'clock by the time in England, I judged. Gently I nudged the old lama who was dozing lightly. "Time we went into the astral!" I said.

"It will be the last time for me," he replied, "for I shall not return to my body again."

Slowly, not hurrying at all, we again entered the astral state. Leisurely we arrived at that house in England. The man lay there sleeping, tossing a little, on his face there was a look of extreme discontent. His astral form was encompassing his physical body with no sign yet of separation.

"Are you coming?" I asked, in the astral.

"Are you coming," repeated the old lama. Slowly, almost reluctantly, the man's astral form rose above his physical body. Rose, and floated above it, reversed, head of astral to feet of physical, as one does. The astral body swayed and bobbed. The sudden roar of a speeding train nearly sent it back into the physical. Then, as though a sudden decision had been reached, his astral form tilted, and stood before us. Rubbing his eyes as one awakening from sleep, he gazed upon us.

"So you want to leave your body?" I asked.

"I do, I hate it here!" he exclaimed vehemently.

We stood looking at each other. He seemed to me to be a much misunderstood man. A man who, in England, would not make his mark on life, but who in Tibet would have his chance. He laughed sourly, "So you want my body! Well, you will find your mistake. It does not matter what you know in England, it is who you know that matters. I cannot get a job, cannot even get unemployment benefit. See if you can do better!"

"Hush, my friend," said the old lama, "for you know not to whom you are speaking. Perhaps your truculence may have impeded you from obtaining employment."

"You will have to grow a beard," I said, "for if I occupy your body, mine will soon be substituted, and I must have a beard to hide the damage to my jaws. Can you grow a beard?"

"Yes, Sir," he replied, "I will grow a beard."

"Very well," I said. "I will return here in one month and will take over your body, giving you release, so that my own body may eventually replace that which I shall have taken. Tell me," I asked, "how were you first approached

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by my people?"

"For a long time, Sir," he said, "I have hated life in England, the unfairness of it, the favoritism. All my life I have been interested in Tibet and Far East countries. All my life I have had 'dreams' in which I saw, or seemed to see, Tibet, China, and other countries which I did not recognize. Some time ago I had a strong impulse to change my name by legal deed, which I did."

"Yes," I remarked, "I know all about that, but how were you approached recently, and what did you see?" He thought a bit, and then said, "To tell you that, I should have to do it in my own way, and some of the information I have seems to be incorrect in view of my later knowledge."

"Very well," was my reply, "tell it to me in your own way and we can correct any misconceptions later. I must get to know you better if I am to take your body, and this is one way of so doing."

"Perhaps I may start with the first actual 'contact'. Then I can collect my thoughts better." From the railway station up the road came the braking judder of a train, bringing latecomers back from the City of London. Shortly there came the sound of the train starting off again, and then 'the man' got down to his story while the old lama and I listened carefully.

"Rose Croft, Thames Ditton," he started, "was quite a nice little place. It was a house set back from the road with a garden in front, a small garden, and a much larger garden at the rear. The house itself had a balcony at the back which gave quite a good view across the countryside. I used to spend a lot of time in the garden, particularly in the front garden because for some time it had been neglected and I was trying to put it in order. The grass had been allowed to grow so that it was several feet high and clearing it had become a major problem. I had already cut half of it with an old Indian Gurkha knife. It was hard work because I had to get on my hands and knees and take swipes at the grass and sharpen the knife on a stone at every few strokes. I was interested also in photography, and for some time I had been trying to take a photograph of an owl which lived in an old fir tree nearby, a fir tree well encased in climbing ivy.

"My attention was distracted by the sight of something fluttering on a branch not far above my head. I looked up and to my delighted surprise I saw a young owl there, flapping about, clutching at the branch, blinded by the bright sunlight. Quietly I put down the knife which I had been using and made my way indoors to fetch a camera. With that in my hands and with the shutter set, I made my way to the tree and silently, or as silently as I could, I climbed up to the first branch. Stealthily I edged along. The bird, unable to see me in the

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bright light but sensing me, edged further away out towards the end. I, quite thoughtless of the danger, moved forward and forward, and with each movement of mine, the bird went further forward until it was almost at the end of the branch, which was now bending dangerously beneath my weight.

“Suddenly I made a precipitous movement and there was a sharp crack and the odorous smell of powdered wood. The branch was rotten and it gave beneath me. I catapulted head first towards the earth beneath me. I seemed to take an eternity to fall those few feet. I remember the grass never looked greener, it seemed larger than life, I could see each individual blade with little insects on it. I remember, too, a ladybird took off in fright at my approach, and then there was a blinding pain, and a flash as if of colored lightning, and all went black. I do not know how long I lay a crumpled inert mass beneath the branches of the old fir tree, but quite suddenly I became aware that I was disengaging myself from the physical body, I was seeing things with a greater perception than ever before. Colors were new and startlingly vivid.

“Gingerly I got to my feet, and looked about me. To my horrified amazement I found that my body was lying prone upon the ground. There was no blood to be seen, but certainly there was evidence of a nasty bump just over the right temple. I was more than a little disconcerted, because the body was breathing stertorously and showing signs of considerable distress. ‘Death,’ I thought, ‘I have died; now I shall never get back.’ I saw a thin smoky cord ascending from the body, from the head of the body to me. There was no movement in the cord, no pulsation, and I felt sickening panic. I wondered what I should do. I seemed to be rooted to the spot in fear, or perhaps for some other reason. Then a sudden movement, the only movement in this strange world of mine, attracted my eye, and I nearly screamed, or should have screamed if I had had a voice. Approaching me across the grass was the figure of a Tibetan lama dressed in the saffron robe of the High Order. His feet were several inches from the ground, and yet he was coming to me steadily. I looked at him with utter stupefaction.

“He came towards me, stretching out his hand, and smiled. He said, ‘You have nothing to fear. There is nothing here to worry you at all.’ I had the impression that his words were in a different tongue from mine, Tibetan maybe, but I understood it, and yet I had heard no sound. There was no sound at all. I could not even hear the sound of the birds, or the whistling of the wind in the trees. ‘Yes,’ he said; divining my thoughts, ‘we do not use speech, but telepathy. I am speaking to you by telepathy.’ Together we looked at each other, and then at the body lying on the ground between us. The Tibetan looked up at me again, and smiled, and said, ‘You are surprised at my presence? I am here because I was drawn to you. I have left my body at this particular instant and I

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was drawn to you because your own particular life vibrations are a fundamental harmonic of one for whom I act. So I have come, I have come because I want your body for one who has to continue life in the Western world, for he has a task to do which brooks no interference.'

"I looked at him aghast. The man was mad saying that he wanted my body! So did I, it was my body. I wasn't having anyone take off my property like that. I had been shaken out of the physical vehicle against my wish, and I was going back. But the Tibetan obviously got my thoughts again. He said, 'What have you to look forward to? Unemployment, illness, unhappiness, a mediocre life in mediocre surroundings, and then in the not too distant future death and the start all over again. Have you achieved anything in life? Have you done anything to be proud of? Think it over.'

"I did think it over. I thought of the past, of the frustrations, the misunderstandings, the unhappiness. He broke in on me, 'Would you like the satisfaction of knowing that your Karma had been wiped away, that you had materially contributed towards a job of the utmost benefit to mankind?' I said, 'Well, I don't know about that, mankind hasn't been too good to me. Why should I bother?'

"He said, 'No, on this Earth you are blinded to the true reality. You do not know what you are saying, but with the passage of time, and in a different sphere, you will become aware of the opportunities you have missed. I want your body for another.' I said, 'Well, what am I going to do about it? I can't wander about as a ghost all the time, and we can't both have the same body.'

"You see, I took all this absolutely literally. There was something compelling about the man, something absolutely genuine. I didn't question for one moment that he could take my body and let me go off somewhere else, but I wanted more information, I wanted to know what I was doing. He smiled at me, and said, reassuringly, 'You, my friend, shall have your reward, you shall escape your Karma, you shall go to a different sphere of activity, and you shall have your sins erased because of what you are doing. But your body cannot be taken unless you are willing.'

"I really did not like the idea at all. I had had my body some forty years, and I was quite attached to it. I didn't like the idea of anyone else taking my body and walking off with it. Besides, what would my wife say, living with a strange man and knowing nothing about it? He looked at me again, and he said, 'Have you no thought for humanity? Are you not willing to do something to redeem your own mistakes, to put some purpose to your own mediocre life? You will be the gainer. The one for whom I act will take over this hard life of yours.'

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“I looked about me. I looked at the body between us, and I thought, ‘Well, what does it matter? It’s been a hard life. I’m well out of it.’ So I said, ‘All right, let me see what sort of place I will go to, and if I like it, I’ll say yes.’ Instantly I had a glorious vision, a vision so glorious that no words could describe it. I was well satisfied, and I said I would be willing, very willing, to have my release and go as soon as possible.”

The old lama chuckled and said, “We had to tell him that it was not that quick, that you would have to come and see for yourself before you made a final decision. After all, it was a happy release for him, hardship for you.”

I looked at them both. “Very well,” I finally remarked, “I will come back in a month. If you then have a beard, and if you then are sure beyond all doubt that you want to go through with this, I will release you and send you off on your own journey.”

He sighed with satisfaction, and a beatific expression stole over his face as he slowly withdrew into the physical body. The old lama and I rose up, and returned to Tibet.

The sun was shining from a blue cloudless sky. Beside me, as I returned to my physical body, the empty shell of the old lama slumped lifeless to the floor. He, I reflected, had gone to peace after a long and honorable life. I, by the Holy Tooth of Buddha, what had I let myself in for?

Messengers went forth into the high mountain lands to the New Home carrying my written affirmation that I would do the task as requested. Messengers came to me, bringing me as a graceful gesture of friendship some of those Indian cakes which had so often been my weakness when I was at the Chakpori. To all intents I was a prisoner in my mountain home. My request that I be permitted to steal down, even in disguise, for a last visit to my beloved Chakpori was denied me. “You may fall victim to the invaders, my brother,” they told me, “for they are remarkably quick to pull the trigger if they have any suspicion.”

“You are sick, Reverend Abbot,” said another. “Should you descend the mountain side your health may not permit you to return. If your Silver Cord be severed, then the Task will not be accomplished.”

The Task! It was so amazing to me that there was “a task” at all. To see the human aura was to me as simple as for a man with perfect sight to see a person standing a few feet away from him. I mused upon the difference between East and West, thinking how easy it would be to convince a Westerner of a new labor-saving food, and how easy it would be to convince an Easterner of something new in the realms of the mind.

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Time slipped by. I rested extensively, more extensively than ever in my life before. Then, shortly before the month was up, shortly before I was to return to England, I had an urgent call to visit again the Land of the Golden Light.

Seated in front of all those High Personages, I had the somewhat irreverent thought that this was like a briefing during the war days! My thought was caught by the others, and one of them smiled and said, "Yes, it is a briefing! And the enemy? The Power of Evil which would stop our task from being accomplished."

"You will meet much opposition and very much calumny," said one. "Your metaphysical powers will not be altered or lost in any way during the changeover," said another.

"This is your last Incarnation," said my beloved Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup. "When you have finished this life you are taking over, you will then return Home, to us." How like my Guide, I thought, to end on a happy note.

They went on to tell me what was going to happen. Three astral-traveling lamas would accompany me to England and would do the actual operation of severing one free from his Silver Cord, and attaching the other: me! The difficulty was that my own body, still in Tibet, had to remain connected as I wanted my own "flesh molecules" to be eventually transferred. So, I returned to the world and together with three companions journeyed to England in the astral state.

The man was waiting. "I am determined to go through with it," he said.

One of the lamas with me turned to the man and said, "You must allow yourself to fall violently by that tree as you did when we first approached you. You must have a severe shake, for your Cord is very securely attached." The man pulled himself a few feet off the ground and then let go, falling to the earth with a satisfying 'thud'. For a moment it seemed as if Time itself stood still. A car which had been speeding along halted on the instant, a bird in full flight suddenly stopped motionless, and stayed in the air.

A horse drawing a van paused with two feet upraised and did not fall. Then, motion came back into our perception. The car jumped into motion, doing about thirty-five miles an hour. The horse started to trot, and the bird hovering above flashed into full flight. Leaves rustled and twisted and the grass rippled into little waves as the wind swept across it.

Opposite, at the local Cottage Hospital, an ambulance rolled to a stop. Two attendants alighted, walked round to the back, and pulled out a stretcher upon which was an old woman. Leisurely the men maneuvered into position

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and carried her into the hospital. "Ah!" said the man. "She is going to the hospital, I am going to freedom." He looked up the road, down the road, and then said, "My wife, she knows all about this. I explained it to her and she agrees."

He glanced at the house and pointed. "That's her room, yours is there. Now I'm more than ready."

One of the lamas grasped the astral form of the man and slid a hand along the Silver Cord. He seemed to be tying it as one ties the umbilical cord of a baby after its birth.

"Ready!" said one of the priests. The man, freed of his connecting Cord, floated away in company with the priest who was assisting him. I felt a searing pain, an utter agony which I never want to feel again, and then the senior lama said, "Lobsang, can you enter that body? We will help you."

The world went black. There was an utterly clammy feeling of black-redness. A sensation of suffocating. I felt that I was being constricted, constrained in something too small for me. I probed about inside the body feeling like a blind pilot in a very complicated aeroplane, wondering how to make this body work. "What if I fail now?" I thought miserably to myself. Desperately I fiddled and fumbled. At last I saw flickers of red, then some green.

Reassured, I intensified my efforts, and then it was like a blind being drawn aside. I could see! My sight was precisely the same as before, I could see the auras of people on the road. But I could not move.

The two lamas stood beside me. From now on, as I was to find, I could always see astral figures as well as physical figures. I could also keep even more in touch with my companions in Tibet. "A consolation prize," I often told myself, "for being compelled to remain in the West at all."

The two lamas were looking concernedly at my rigidity, at my inability to move. Desperately I strained and strained, blaming myself bitterly for not having tried to find out and master any difference between an Eastern body and a Western. "Lobsang! Your fingers are twitching!" called out one of the lamas. Urgently I explored and experimented.

A faulty movement brought temporary blindness. With the help of the lamas I vacated the body again, studied it, and carefully reentered. This time it was more successful. I could see, could move an arm, a leg. With immense effort I rose to my knees, wavered and tottered, and fell prone again. As if I were lifting the whole weight of the world I rose shakily to my feet.

From the house came a woman running, saying, "Oh, what have you done now? You should come in and lie down." She looked at me and a startled ex-

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pression came upon her face, and for a moment I thought she was going to scream in hysteria. She controlled herself, and put an arm round my shoulders and helped me across the grass. Over a little gravel path, up one stone step, and through a wooden doorway and into a small hallway. From thence it was difficult indeed, for there were many stairs to climb and I was as yet very uncertain and clumsy in my movements.

The house really consisted of two flats and the one which I was to occupy was the upper. It seemed so strange, entering an English home in this manner, climbing up the somewhat steep stairs, hanging on to the rail to prevent myself from falling over backwards. My limbs felt rubbery, as if I lacked full control over them—as indeed was the case, for to gain complete mastery of this strange new body took some days. The two lamas hovered round, showing considerable concern, but of course there was nothing they could do. Soon they left me, promising to return in the small hours of the night.

Slowly I entered the bedroom which was mine, stumbling like a sleep-walker, jerking like a mechanical man. Gratefully I toppled over on to the bed. At least, I consoled myself, I cannot fall down now! My windows looked out on to both the front and the back of the house. By turning my head to the right I could gaze across the small front garden, on to the road, across to the small Cottage Hospital, a sight which I did not find comforting in my present state.

At the other side of the room was the window through which, by turning my head to the left, I could see the length of the larger garden. It was unkempt, coarse grass growing in clumps as in a meadow. Bushes divided the garden of one house from the next. At the end of the grassy stretch there was a fringe of straggly trees and a wire fence. Beyond I could see the outlines of farm buildings and a herd of cows grazing nearby.

Outside my windows I could hear voices, but they were such “English” voices that I found it almost impossible to understand what was being said. The English I had heard previously had been mostly American and Canadian, and here the strangely accented syllables of one of the Old School Tie Brigade baffled me. My own speech was difficult, I found. When I tried to speak I produced just a hollow croak. My vocal cords seemed thick, strange. I learned to speak slowly, and to visualize what I was going to say first. I tended to say “cha” instead of “j”, making “chon” for John, and similar errors. Sometimes I could hardly understand what I was saying myself!

That night the astral traveling lamas came again and cheered away my depression by telling me that now I should find astral traveling even easier. They told me, too, of my lonely Tibetan body safely stored in a stone coffin, under the unceasing care of three monks. Research into old literature, they

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told me, showed that it would be easy to let me have my own body, but that the complete transfer would take a little time.

For three days I stayed in my room, resting, practicing movements, and becoming accustomed to the changed life. On the evening of the third day I walked shakily into the garden, under cover of darkness. Now, I found, I was beginning to master the body, although there were unaccountable moments when an arm or a leg would fail to respond to my commands.

The next morning the woman who was now known as my wife said, "You will have to go to the Labor Exchange today to see if they have any job for you yet." Labor Exchange? For some time it conveyed nothing to me, until she used the term "Ministry of Labor" then it dawned on me. I had never been to such a place and had no idea of how to behave or what to do there. I knew, from the conversation, that it was some place near Hampton Court but the name was Molesey.

For some reason which I did not then comprehend, I was not entitled to claim any unemployment benefit. Later I found that if a person left his employment voluntarily, no matter how unpleasant or unreasonable that employment, he was not entitled to claim benefit, not even if he had paid into the fund for twenty years.

Labor Exchange! I said, "Help me get the bicycle, and I will go." Together we walked down the stairs, turned left to the garage now stuffed with old furniture, and there was the bicycle, an instrument of torture which I had used only once before, in Chungking, where I had gone flying down the hill before I could find the brakes. Gingerly I got on the contraption and wobbled off along the road towards the railway bridge, turning left at the forked road. A man waved cheerily, and waving back, I almost fell off. "You don't look at all well," he called. "Go carefully!"

On I pedaled, getting strange pains in the leg.

On, and turned right, as previously instructed, into the wide road to Hampton Court. As I rode along, my legs suddenly failed to obey my commands, and I just managed to free-wheel across the road to tumble in a heap, with the bicycle on top of me, on a stretch of grass beside the road. For a moment I lay there, badly shaken, then a woman who had been doing something to her mats outside her front door came storming down the path, yelling, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, drunk at this time of the day. I saw you. I've a mind to ring up the police!" She scowled at me, then turned and dashed back to her house, picked up the mats and slammed the door behind her.

"How little she knows!" I thought. "How little she knows!"

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For perhaps twenty minutes I lay there, recovering. People came to their doors and stared out. People came to their windows and peered from behind curtains. Two women came to the end of their gardens and discussed me in loud, raucous voices. Nowhere did I detect the slightest thought that I might be ill or in need of attention. At last, with immense effort, I staggered to my feet, mounted the bicycle, and rode off in the direction of Hampton Court.

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CHAPTER NINE

The exchange was a dismal house in a side street. I rode up, dismounted, and started to walk in the entrance. "Want your bike stolen?" asked a voice behind me. I turned to the speaker. "Surely the unemployed do not steal from each other?" I asked.

"You must be new around here; put a lock and chain round the bike or you will have to walk home." With that the speaker shrugged his shoulders and went into the building. I turned back and looked in the saddlebag of the machine. Yes, there was a lock and chain. I was just going to put the chain round the wheel as I had seen others do when a horrid thought struck me—where was the key? I fumbled in those unfamiliar pockets and brought out a bunch of keys. Trying one after the other, I eventually found the correct one.

I walked up the path and into the house. Cardboard signs with black inked arrows pointed the way. I turned right and entered a room where there were a lot of hard wooden chairs packed tightly together.

"Hello, Prof!" said a voice. "Come and sit by me and wait your turn."

I moved to the speaker and pushed my way to a chair beside him. "You look different this morning," he continued. "What have you been doing to yourself?"

I let him do the talking, picking up stray bits of information. The clerk called names, and men went up to his desk and sat before him. A name was called which seemed vaguely familiar. "Someone I know?" I wondered. No one moved. The name was called again. "Go on, that's you!" said my new friend. I rose and walked to the desk and sat down as I had seen the others do.

"What's the matter with you this morning?" asked the clerk. "I saw you come in, then I lost sight of you and thought you had gone home." He looked at

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me carefully.

“You look different this morning, somehow. Can’t be hair style, because you haven’t any hair.” Then he straightened up and said, “No, nothing for you, I’m afraid. Better luck next time. Next, please.”

I walked out, feeling despondent, and cycled back to Hampton Court. There I bought a newspaper, and continued on to the banks of the Thames. This was a beauty spot, a place where Londoners came for a holiday. I sat down on the grassy bank, with my back to a tree, and read the Situations Vacant columns in the paper.

“You’ll never get a job through the Exchange!” said a voice, and a man came off the path and plonked down on the grass beside me. Plucking a long-stemmed grass, he chewed it reflectively, rolling it from side to side of his mouth. “They don’t pay you any dole, see? So they don’t get you fixed up either. They gives the jobs to them as what they has to pay. Then they save money, see? If they get you a job they have to keep somebuddy else on the dole and the Gov’mment makes a fuss, see?”

I thought it over. It made sense to me, even if the man’s grammar almost made my head swim. “Well, what would you do?” I asked.

“Me! Blimey, I don’t want no job, I just goes to get the dole, it keeps me, that an’ a bit I makes on the side, like. Well, Guv. If you really want a job, go to one of them Bureys—here, let’s have a look.” He reached over and took my paper, leaving me to wonder blankly what a Burey could be. What a lot there was to learn, I thought. How ignorant I was of everything to do with the Western world. Licking his fingers, and mumbling the letters of the alphabet to himself, the man fumbled through the pages. “Here y’are!” he exclaimed triumphantly. “Employment Bureys—here, take a look at it yerself.”

Quickly I scanned the column so clearly indicated by his very dirty thumb mark. Employment Bureau, Employment Agencies. Jobs. “But this is for women,” I said disgustedly.

“Garn!” he replied, “You can’t read, it says there men and women. Now you go along an’ see ‘em an’ don’t take no old buck from them. Oh! They’ll play you up and string you along if you let ‘em. Tell ‘em you want a job, or else!”

That afternoon I hurried off to the heart of London, climbing the dingy stairs to a ramshackle office in a back street of Soho. A painted woman with artificially blond hair and scarlet talons of nails was sitting at a metal desk in a room so small it might once have been a cupboard. “I want a job,” I said.

She leaned back and surveyed me coolly. Yawning widely, she displayed

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a mouthful of decayed teeth and a furred tongue. "Ooaryer?" she said. I gaped at her blankly.

"Ooaryer?" she repeated.

"I am sorry," I said, "but I do not understand your question."

"Oogawd!" she sighed wearily. "Ee don't speak no English. 'Erefillupaform." She threw a questionnaire at me, removed her pen, clock, a book and her handbag, and disappeared into some back room. I sat down and struggled with the questions. At long last she reappeared and jerked her thumb in the direction from whence she had come.

"Git in there," she commanded. I rose from my seat and stumbled into a little larger room. A man was sitting at a battered desk untidily littered with papers. He was chewing on the butt of a cheap and stinking cigar, a stained trilby hat was perched on the back of his head. He motioned for me to sit in front of him.

"Got yer Registration money?" he asked. I reached in my pocket and produced the sum stated on the form. The man took it from me, counted it twice, and put it in his pocket. "Where you bin waitin'?" he asked.

"In the outer office," I replied innocently. To my consternation he broke out into great guffaws of laughter.

"Hor! Hor! Hor!" he roared. "I said, 'Where you bin waitin'?' and 'e sezs 'in th' outer office'!" Wiping his streaming eyes, he controlled himself with a visible effort, and said, "Look, Cock, you ain't 'alf a comic, but I ain't got no time to waste. 'Ave you bin a waiter or aitcha?"

"No," I replied. "I want employment in any of these lines"—giving him a whole list of things I could do—"now, can you help or can you not?"

He frowned as he looked at the list. "Well, I dunno," he said doubtfully, "you speak like a gook . . . look, we'll see what we can do. Come in a week today." With that, he re-lit his now extinguished cigar, parked his feet on the desk as he picked up a racing paper and started to read. I made my disillusioned way out, past the painted woman who greeted my departure with a haughty stare and a sniff, down the creaking stairs and into the dismal street.

Not far away there was another agency, and to it I made my way. My heart sank at the sight of the entrance. A side door, bare wooden stairs, and dirty walls with the paint peeling off. Upstairs, on the second floor, I opened a door marked 'enter'. Inside was one large room, extending the width of the building. Rickety tables stood about and at each one sat a man or a woman

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with a pile of index cards in front.

"Yes? What can I do for you?" asked a voice at my side. Turning I saw a woman who might have been seventy, although she looked older. Without waiting for me to say anything, she handed me a questionnaire with the request that I complete it and hand it to the girl at the desk. I soon filled in all the numerous and very personal details and then took it to the girl as directed. Without a glance at it she said, "You may pay me your registration fee now." I did so thinking that they had an easy way of making money. She counted the money carefully, passed it through a hatch to another woman who also counted it, then I was given a receipt. The girl stood up and called, "Is anyone free?"

A man at a desk in the far distance lethargically waved a hand. The girl turned to me and said, "That gentleman over there will see you." I walked over to him, threading my way between desks. For some time he took no notice of me but went on writing, then he held out his hand. I took it, and shook it, but he snatched it away crossly, saying irritably, "No, no! I want to see your Receipt, your Receipt, you know." Scrutinizing it carefully, he turned it over, and examined the blank side. Rereading the front side, he apparently decided that it was genuine after all for he said, "Will you take a chair?"

To my amazement he took a fresh form, and asked me the answers to all the questions which I had just written. Dropping my completed form in the wastepaper basket, and his in a drawer, he said, "Come to me in a week's time and we will see what we can do." He resumed his writing, writing which I could see was a personal letter to some woman!

"Hey!" I said loudly, "I want attention now."

"My dear fellow!" he expostulated, "We simply cannot do things so hurriedly, we must have system, you know, system!"

"Well," I said, "I want a job now, or my money back."

"Dear, dear!" he sighed. "How perfectly ghastly!" With a quick glance at my determined face, he sighed again, and began pulling out drawer after drawer, as if stalling for time while he thought what to do next. One drawer he pulled too far. There was a crash and all sorts of personal belongings scattered on the floor. A box of some thousand paper clips spilled open. We scrabbled about on the floor, picking up things and tossing them on the desk.

At last everything was picked up and swept into the drawer. "That blawsted drawer!" he said resignedly, "Always slipping out of place like that, the other wallahs are used to it." For some time he sat there, going through his File Cards, then looking up bundles of papers, shaking his head negatively as

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he tossed them back and removing another bundle. "Ah!" he said at last, then fell silent. Minutes later, he said, "Yes, I have a job for you!"

He rifled through his papers, changed his spectacles and reached out blindly towards a pile of cards. Picking up the top one he placed it in front of him and slowly began to write. "Now where is it? Ah! Clapham, do you know Clapham?" Without waiting for a reply, he continued, "It is a photographic processing works. You will work by night. Street photographers in the West End bring in their stuff at night and collect the proofs in the morning. H'mm yes, let me see." He went on fumbling through the papers. "You will sometimes have to work in the West End yourself with a camera as a relief man. Now take this card to that address and see him," he said, pointing with his pencil to a name he had written on the card.

Clapham was not one of the most salubrious districts of London; the address to which I went, in a mean back street in the slums adjacent to the railway sidings, was an ill-favored place indeed. I knocked at the door of a house which had the paint peeling off, and one window of which had the glass "repaired" with sticky paper. The door opened slightly and a slatternly woman peered out, tousled hair falling over her face.

"Yeh? 'Oo d'ye want?" I told her and she turned without speaking and yelled, " 'Arry! Man to see ye!" Turning she pushed the door shut, leaving me outside. Sometime later the door opened, and a rough looking man stood there, unshaven, no collar, cigarette hanging from his lower lip.

His toes showed through great holes in his felt slippers. "What d'ye want, Cock?" he said. I handed him the card from the Employment Bureau. He took it, looked at it from all angles, looked from the card to me and back again, then said, "Furriner, eh? Plenty of 'em in Clapham. Not so choosey as us Britishers."

"Will you tell me about the job?" I asked.

"Not now!" he said, "I've got to see you fust. Come in, I'm in the bismint."

With that he turned and disappeared! I entered the house in a considerably fuddled state of mind. How could he be in the "bismint" when he had been in front of me, and what was the "bismint" anyhow?

The hall of the house was dark. I stood there not knowing where to go, and I jumped as a voice yelled beside me, seemingly at my feet, "Hi Cock, ain't'cha comin' dahn?"

A clatter of feet, and the man's head appeared from a dimly lit basement door which I had not noticed. I followed him down some rickety wooden stairs, fearing that any moment I would fall through. "The woiks!" the man said,

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proudly. A dim amber bulb shone through a haze of cigarette smoke. The atmosphere was stifling. Along one wall was a bench with a drain running through its length. Photographic dishes stood at intervals along it. On a table off to the side stood a battered enlarger, while yet another table, covered in lead sheet, contained a number of large bottles.

"I'm 'Arry," said the man, "Make up yer solutions so I kin see how yer shape." As an afterthought, he added "We always use Johnson's Contrasty, brings 'em up real good." 'Arry stood aside, striking a match on the seat of his trousers so that he could light a cigarette. Quickly I made up the solutions, developer stop-bath, and fixer.

"Okay," he said. "Now get a holt of that reel of film and run off a few proofs." I went to make a test-strip, but he said, "No, don t waste paper, give 'em five seconds."

'Arry was satisfied with my performance. "We pays monthly, Cock," he said. "Don't do no noods. Don't want no trouble with the cops. Give all the noods to me. The boys sometimes gets ideas and slips in special noods for special customers. Pass 'em all to me, see? Now you starts here at ten tonight and leaves at seven in the mornin', Okay? Then it's a deal!"

That night, just before ten, I walked along the dingy street, trying to see the numbers in the all-pervading gloom. I reached the house and climbed the untidy steps to the scarred and blistered door. Knocking, I stepped back and waited. But not for long. The door was flung open with a creak from its rusted hinges. The same woman was there, the one who had answered my knock earlier. The same woman, but what a different woman. Her face was powdered and painted, her hair was carefully waved and her almost transparent dress, with the hall light behind her, showed her plump form in clear detail. She directed a wide, tooth smile at me and said, "Come in Dearie. I'm Marie. Who sent you?" Without waiting for my reply, she bent over towards me her low-cut dress sagging dangerously, and continued, "It's thirty shillings for half an hour, or three pun' ten for the whole night. I know tricks, Dearie!" As she moved to permit me to enter, the hall light shone upon my face. She saw my beard and glowered at me.

"Oh, it s'you!" she said frostily, and the smile was wiped from her face as chalk is wiped from a blackboard by a wet rag. She snorted, "Wasting my time! The very idea of it! Here, you," she bawled, "you will have to get a key, I'm usually busy at this time o'night."

I turned, shut the street door behind me, and made my way down to the dismal basement. There were stacks of cassettes to be developed, it seemed

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to me that all the photographers in London had dumped their films here. I worked in the Stygian darkness unloading cassettes, fixing clips to one end and inserting them in the tanks. "Clack-clackclack" went the timer clock. Quite suddenly the timer bell went off, to tell me that the films were ready for the stop bath. The unexpected sound made me leap to my feet and bump my head against a low beam. Out with all the films, into the stop bath for a few minutes. Out again and into the fixing bath for a quarter of an hour. Another dip, this time in hypo eliminator, and the films were ready for washing. While this was being done, I switched on the amber light and enlarged up a few proofs.

Two hours later I had the films all developed, fixed, washed, and quick-dried in methylated spirits. Four hours on, and I was making rapid progress with the work. I was also becoming hungry. Looking about me, I could see no means of boiling a kettle. There wasn't even a kettle to boil, anyway, so I sat down and opened my sandwiches and carefully washed a photographic measure in order to get a drink of water. I thought of the woman upstairs, wondering if she was drinking beautiful hot tea, and wishing that she would bring me a cup.

The door at the head of the basement stairs was flung open with a crash, letting in a flood of light. Hastily I jumped up to cover an opened packet of printing paper before the light spoiled it, as a voice bawled, "Hey! You there! Want a cuppa? Business is bad tonight and I just made meself a pot before turning in. Couldn't get you out of my mind. Must have been telepathy." She laughed at her own joke and clattered down the stairs. Putting down the tray, she sat on the wooden seat, exhaling noisily.

"Phew!" she said, "Ain't 'alf 'ot down here." She undid the belt of her dressing-gown, pulled it open, and to my horror she had nothing on beneath! She saw my look and cackled, "I'm not trying for you, you've got other developments on your hands tonight." She stood up, her dressing-gown falling to the ground, and reached for the stack of drying prints. "Geel!" she exclaimed, leafing through them. "What mugs. Don't know why these geezers have their pictures took." She sat down again, apparently abandoning her dressing-gown without regret; it was hot here, and I was getting hotter!

"Do you believe in telepathy?" she asked.

"Of course I do!" I replied.

"Well I saw a show at the Palladium and they did telepathy there. I said it was genuine, but the fellow who took me said it was all a fake."

There is an oriental legend about a traveler on the wide Gobi desert, his camel had died, and the man was crawling along, almost dying of thirst. Ahead

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of him he suddenly saw what appeared to be a waterskin, a goatskin filled with water which travelers carry. Hurrying desperately to the skin, he bent down to drink, and found it was merely a skin stuffed with first class diamonds which some other thirsty traveler had thrown away to lighten his load. Such is the way of the West, people seek material riches, seek technical advancement, rockets with bigger and better bangs, pilotless aircraft, and attempted investigation in space. The real values, astral traveling, clairvoyance, and telepathy they treat with suspicion, believing them to be fakes or comic stage turns.

When the British were in India it was well known that the Indians could send messages long distances, telling of revolts, impending arrivals, or any news of interest. Such messages would travel the country in mere hours. The same thing was noticed in Africa and was known as the "Bush telegraph." With training, there need be no telegraph wires! No telephones to jangle our nerves. People could send messages by their own innate abilities. In the East there have been centuries of study into such matters; Eastern countries are "sympathetic" to the idea and there is no negative thought to impede the working of the gifts of Nature.

"Marie," I said, "I will show you a little trick which demonstrates telepathy, or Mind over Matter. I being the Mind, you being the Matter."

She looked at me suspiciously, even glowered for a moment, and then replied, "Orlright, anything for a lark."

I concentrated my thoughts on the back of her neck, imagining a fly biting her. I visualized the insect biting. Suddenly Marie swatted the back of her neck using a very naughty word to describe the offending insect. I visualized the bite being stronger, and then she looked at me and laughed. "My!" she said, "If I could do that I certainly would have some fun with the fellows who visit me!"

For night after night I went to the slovenly house in that drab back street. Often, when Marie was not busy, she would come with a teapot of tea to talk and to listen. Gradually I became aware that beneath her hard exterior, in spite of the life which she led, she was a very kind woman to those in need. She told me about the man who employed me and warned me to be at the house early on the last day of the month.

Night after night I developed and printed and left everlasting ready for an early morning collection. For a whole month I saw no one but Marie, then on the thirty-first, I stayed on late. About nine o'clock a shifty-looking individual came clattering down the uncarpeted stairs. He stopped at the bottom, and looked at me with open hostility. "Think you are going to get paid first, eh?" he

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snarled. "You are night man, get out of here!"

"I will go when I am ready, not before," I answered.

"You!" he said, "I'll teach you to give me none of yer lip!"

He snatched up a bottle, knocked off the neck against a wall, and came at me with the raw, jagged edge aimed straight at my face. I was tired, and quite a little cross. I had been taught fighting by some of the greatest Masters of the art in the East. I disarmed the measly little fellow—a simple task—and put him across my knees, giving him the biggest beating he had ever had. Marie, hearing the screams, dashed out from her bed and now sat on the stairs enjoying the scene! The fellow was actually weeping, so I shoved his head in the print-washing tank in order to wash away his tears and stop the flow of obscene language. As I let him stand up, I said, "Stand in that corner. If you move until I say you may, I will start all over again!" He did not move.

"My! That was a sight for sore eyes," said Marie. "The little runt is a leader of one of the Soho gangs. You have got him frightened, thought he was the greatest fighter ever, he did!"

I sat and waited. About an hour later, the man who had employed me came down the stairs, turning pale as he saw me and the gangster. "I want my money," I said. "It's been a poor month, I haven't any money, I have had to pay Protection to him," he said, pointing to the gangster. I looked at him. "D'you think I'm working in this stinking hole for nothing?" I asked.

"Give me a few days and I'll see if I can rake some up. He"—pointing to the gangster—"takes all my money because if I don't pay him he gets my men in trouble." No money, not much hope of getting any, either! I agreed to continue for another two weeks to give "the Boss" time to get some money somewhere. Sadly I left the house, thinking how fortunate it was that I cycled to Clapham in order to save fares. As I went to unchain my cycle, the gangster sidled furtively up to me. "Say, Guv'," he whispered hoarsely, "d'ye want a good job? Lookin' arter me. Twenty quid a week, all found."

"Get out of it, you runny-nosed little squirt," I answered dourly.

"Twenty-five quid a week!"

As I turned toward him in exasperation he skipped nimbly away, muttering, "Make it thirty, top offer, all the wimmin you want, and the booze you kin drink, be a sport!"

At the sight of my expression he vaulted over the basement railing and disappeared into somebody's private rooms. I turned, mounted the bicycle,

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and rode off.

For nearly three months I kept the job, doing processing and then having a turn on the streets as street-photographer, but neither I nor the other men got paid. At last, in desperation, we all finished.

By now we had moved to one of those dubious Squares in the Bayswater district, and I visited Labor Exchange after Labor Exchange in an attempt to get work. At last, probably in order to get rid of me, one official said, "Why don't you go to the Higher Appointments branch, at Tavistock Square? I'll give you a card." Full of hope I went to Tavistock Square. Wonderful promises were made to me. Here is one of them:

"By Jove, yes, we can suit you exactly, we want a man for a new atom research station in Caithness, in Scotland. Will you go up for an interview?" Industriously he raked among his papers.

I replied, "Do they pay traveling expenses?"

"Oh! Dear dear no!" was the emphatic reply, "You will have to go at your own expense."

On another occasion I traveled—at my own expense—to Cardigan in Wales. A man with a knowledge of civil engineering was required. I traveled, at my own expense, across England and into Wales. The Station was a shocking distance from the place of interview. I trudged through the streets of Cardigan and reached the other side. "My, my! It is indeed a long way yet, look you!" said the pleasant woman of whom I sought directions. I walked on, and on, and at last reached the entrance to a house hidden by trees.

The drive was well kept. It was also very long; uphill. At last I reached the house. The amiable man whom I saw looked at my papers (which I had had sent to me in England from Shanghai). He looked, and nodded approvingly. "With papers such as these you should have no difficulty in gaining employment," he said. "Unfortunately you have no experience in England on civil engineering contracts. Therefore I cannot offer you an appointment. But tell me," he asked, "You are a qualified doctor, why did you also study Civil Engineering? I see you have a Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering."

"As a medical man, I was going to travel to remote districts, and I wanted to be able to build my own hospital," I said.

"H'mmph!" he grunted, "I wish I could help you, but I cannot."

Off I wandered through the streets of Cardigan, back to the dreary railway station. There was a two-hour wait for a train, but at last I arrived home to

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report, once again, no job. The next day I went back to the Employment Agency.

The man sitting at his desk—did he ever move, I wondered—said, “I say, Old Boy, we simply cannot talk here. Take me out to lunch and I may be able to tell you something, what?” For more than an hour I loitered about in the street outside, looking in the windows, and wishing that my feet would stop aching. A London policeman sourly watched me from the other side of the street, apparently unable to decide if I was a harmless individual or a prospective bank robber. Perhaps his feet were aching too! At last the Man was separated from his desk and came clattering down the creaky stairs. “A Number Seventy-Nine, Old Boy, we will take a Number Seventy-Nine. I know a nice little place, quite moderate for the service they give.”

We walked up the street, boarded a “79” bus, and soon reached our destination, one of those restaurants in a side street just off a main thoroughfare where the smaller the building the higher the charge.

The Man Without his Desk and I had our lunch, mine a very frugal one and his exceedingly ample, then, with a sigh of satisfaction, he said, “You know, Old Boy, you fellows expect to get good appointments, but do you ever think that if the appointments available were that good, we of the staff would take them first? Our own jobs do not allow us to live in comfort, you know.”

“Well,” I said, “there must be some way of obtaining employment in this benighted city or outside it.”

“Your trouble is that you look different, you attract attention. You also look ill. Maybe it would help if you shaved off your beard.” He gazed at me reflectively, obviously wondering how to make a graceful exit. Suddenly he looked at his watch and jumped to his feet in alarm; “I say, Old Boy, I must simply fly, the old Slave Master will be watching y’know.” He patted my arm and said, “Ta! Ta! Don’t waste money coming to us, we simply have no jobs except for waiters and their ilk!” With that he turned in a whirl and was gone, leaving me to pay his quite considerable bill.

I wandered out and along the street. For want of something better to do, I looked at small advertisements in a shop window. “Young widow with small child wants work . . .”

“Man, able to undertake intricate carvings, needs commissions.”

“Lady Masseuse gives treatment at home.”

(I’ll bet she does, I thought!) As I walked away, I pondered the question; if the orthodox agencies, bureaux, exchanges etc., could not help me, then why not try an advertisement in a shop window. “Why not?” said my poor tired

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feet as they pounded hollowly on the hard, unsympathetic pavement.

That night, at home, I racked my brains trying to work out how to live and how to make enough money to carry on with Aura research. At last, I typed six postcards saying, "Doctor of Medicine (Not British Registered) offers help in psychological cases. Enquire within." I did another six which read, "Professional man, very widely traveled, scientific qualifications, offers services for anything unusual. Excellent references. Write Box —" The next day, with the advertisements prominently displayed in certain strategic windows in London shops, I sat back to await results. They came. I managed to obtain enough psychological work to keep me going and the flickering fires of our finances slowly improved. As a sideline I did free-lance advertising, and one of the greatest pharmaceutical firms in England gave me part-time work. The very generous and human Director, a doctor, whom I saw, would have taken me on but for the Staff Insurance Scheme which was in force. I was too old and too sick. The strain of taking over a body was terrible. The strain of having the molecules of the "new" body exchanged for those of my own was almost more than I could stand, yet, in the interests of science, I stuck it out. More frequently now I traveled in the astral to Tibet by night or on weekends when I knew that I should not be disturbed, for to disturb the body of one who is astral traveling can so easily be fatal. My solace was in the company of those High Lamas who could see me in the astral, and my reward was in their commendation of my actions. On one such visit I was mourning the passing of a very much beloved pet, a cat with intelligence to put many humans to shame. An old lama, with me in the astral, smiled in sympathy, and said, "My Brother, do you not remember the Story of the Mustard Seed?" The Mustard Seed, yes! How well I remembered it, one of the teachings of our Faith.

The poor young woman had lost her firstborn child. Almost demented with grief she wandered through the streets of the city, pleading for something, someone, to bring her son back to life. Some people turned away from her in pity, some sneered and mocked her, calling her insane that she should believe her child could be restored to life. She would not be consoled, and none could find words with which to ease her pain. At last an old priest, noting her utter despair, called her and said, "There is only one man in the whole world who can help you. He is the Perfect One, the Buddha who resides at the top of that mountain. Go and see him."

The young bereaved mother, her body aching with the weight of her sorrow, slowly walked up the hard mountain path until at last she turned a corner and saw the Buddha seated upon a rock. Prostrating herself, she cried "Oh! Buddha! Bring my son back to life." The Buddha rose and gently touched the poor woman, saying, "Go down into the city. Go from house to house and bring

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to me a mustard seed from a house in which no one has ever died.” The young woman shouted with exultation as she rose to her feet and hastened down the mountain side. She hurried to the first house and said, “The Buddha bids me bring a mustard seed from a house which has never known death.”

“In this house,” she was told, “many have died.” At the next house she was told, “It is impossible to tell how many have died here, for this is an old house.”

She went from house to house, throughout that street, to the next street, and the one after. Scarcely pausing for rest or food, she went through the city from house to house and she could not find a single house which had not at some time been visited by death.

Slowly she retraced her steps up the mountain slopes. The Buddha was, as before, sitting in meditation. “Have you brought the mustard seed?” He asked.

“No, nor do I seek it any more,” she said. “My grief blinded me so that I thought that only I suffered and sorrowed.”

“Then why have you again come to me?” asked the Buddha.

“To ask you to teach me the truth,” she answered.

And the Buddha told her: “In all the world of man, and all the world of Gods, this alone is the Law: All things are impermanent.”

Yes, I knew all the Teachings, but the loss of one dearly loved was still a loss. The old lama smiled again and said, “A beautiful Little Person shall come to you to cheer your extraordinary difficult and hard life. Wait!”

Some time after, several months after, we took the Lady Ku’ei into our home. She was a Siamese kitten of surpassing beauty and intelligence. Brought up by us as one would bring up a human, she has responded as a good human would. Certainly she has lightened our sorrows and eased the burden of human treachery.

Free-lance work without any legal standing was difficult indeed. Patients subscribed to the view that; the Devil was ill, the Devil a monk would be. The Devil was well, the Devil was he! The stories which defaulting patients told to explain their nonpayment would fill many books, and cause the critics to work overtime. I continued my search for permanent work.

“Oh!” said a friend, “you can do free-lance writing, “ghost” writing. Have you thought of that? A friend of mine has written a number of books, I will give you an introduction to him.” Off I went to one of the great London Museums to

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see the friend. Into an office I was shown, and for a moment I thought I was in the Museum storeroom! I was afraid to move in case I knocked something over, so I just sat and became weary of sitting. At last "the Friend" came in. "Books?" he said. "Free-lance writing? I'll put you in touch with my agent. He may be able to fix you up." He scribbled industriously, and then handed me a paper with an address upon it. Almost before I knew what had happened, I was outside the office. "Well," I thought, "Will this be another wild-goose chase?"

I looked at the piece of paper in my hand. Regent Street? Now, which end of the street would it be? I got out of the train at Oxford Circus, and with my usual luck, found that I was at the wrong end! Regent Street was crowded, people seemed to be milling round the entrance of the big stores.

A Boys' Brigade or Salvation Army Band, I did not know which, was proceeding noisily down Conduit Street. I walked on, past the Goldsmiths and Silversmiths Company, thinking how a little of their wares would enable me to get on with research. Where the street curved to enter Piccadilly Circus I crossed the road and looked for that wretched number. Travel Agency, Shoe Shop, but no Authors' Agent. Then I saw the number, sandwiched in between two shops. In I went to a little vestibule at the far end of which was an open lift. There was a bell push, so I used it. Nothing happened. I waited perhaps five minutes and then pressed the button again.

A clatter of feet, "You brought me up from the coal 'ole!" said a voice. "I was just 'avin' a cup of tea. Which floor d'ye want?"

"Mr. B," I said, "I do not know which floor."

"Aw, third floor," said the man. "'E's in, I took 'im up. This is it," he said, sliding open the iron gate. "Turn right, in that door." With that he disappeared back to his cooling tea.

I pushed open the door indicated and walked up to a little counter. "Mr. B?" I said. "I have an appointment with him." The dark haired girl went off in search of Mr. B and I looked around me. At the other side of the counter girls were drinking tea. An elderly man was being given instruction about delivering some parcels. There was a table behind me with a few magazines upon it—like in a dentist's waiting room, I thought—and on the wall was an advertisement for some publishers. The office space seemed to be littered with parcels of books, and newly-opened typescripts were in a neat row against a far wall.

"Mr. B will be with you in a moment," said a voice, and I turned to smile my thanks to the dark-haired girl. At that moment a side door opened, and Mr. B came in. I looked at him with interest for he was the first Authors' Agent I had ever seen or heard of! He had a beard, and I could visualize him as an old

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Chinese Mandarin. Although an Englishman, he had the dignity and courtesy of an elderly, educated Chinese of which there is no peer in the West.

Mr. B came, greeted me and shook my hand, and let me through the side door to a very small room which reminded me of a prison cell without

the bars. "And now what can I do for you?" he asked.

"I want a job," I said.

He asked me questions about myself, but I could see from his aura that he had no job to offer, that he was being courteous because of the man who had introduced me. I showed him my Chinese papers, and his aura flickered with interest. He picked them up, examined them most carefully, and said, "You should write a book. I think I can get one commissioned for you." This was a shock which almost bowled me over; me write a book? Me? About me? I looked at his aura carefully in order to see if he really meant it or if it was just a polite "brush-off." His aura said that it was meant but that he had a doubt as to my writing ability. As I took my leave his last words were, "You really should write a book."

"Aw, don't look so glum" said the liftman. "The sun is shining outside. Didn't he want your book?"

"That's just the trouble," I replied, as I got out of the lift, "He did!"

I walked along Regent Street thinking that everyone was mad. Me write a book? Crazy! All I wanted was a job providing enough money to keep us alive and a little over so that I could do auric research, and all the offers I had was to write a silly book about myself.

Some time before I had answered an advertisement for a Technical Writer for instruction books in connection with aircraft. By the evening mail I received a letter asking me to attend for an interview on the morrow. "Ah!" I thought, "I may get this job at Crawley after all!"

Early the next morning, as I was having breakfast before going to Crawley, a letter dropped in the box. It was from Mr. B. "You should write a book," the letter said.

"Think it over carefully and come and see me again."

"Pah!" I said to myself, "I should hate to write a book!"

Off I went to Clapham Station to get a train for Crawley. The train was the slowest ever, to my mind. It seemed to dawdle at every station and grind along the stretches between as if the engine or the driver was at the last gasp.

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Eventually I arrived at Crawley. The day was swelteringly hot now and I had just missed the bus. The next one would be too late. I plodded along through the streets, being misdirected by person after person, because the firm I was going to see was in a very obscure place. At long last, almost too tired to bother, I reached a long, unkempt lane. Walking along it I finally reached a tumble-down house which looked as if a regiment of soldiers had been billeted there.

"You wrote an exceptionally good letter," said the man who interviewed me. "We wanted to see what sort of man could write a letter like that!"

I gasped at the thought that he had brought me all this way out of idle curiosity. "But you advertised for a Technical Writer," I said, "and I am willing for any test."

"Ah! Yes," said the man, "but we have had much trouble since that advertisement was inserted, we are reorganizing and shall not take on anyone for six months at least. But we thought you would like to come and see our firm."

"I consider you should pay my fare," I retorted, "as you have brought me here on a fool's errand."

"Oh, we cannot do that," he said. "You offered to come for an interview; we merely accepted your offer."

I was so depressed that the long walk back to the station seemed even longer. The inevitable wait for a train, and the slow journey back to Clapham. The train wheels beneath me seemed to say: "You should write a book, you should write a book, you should write a book." In Paris, France, there is another Tibetan lama who came to the West for a special purpose. Unlike me, circumstances decreed that he should evade all publicity. He does his job and very few people know that he was once a lama in a Tibetan lamasery at the foot of the Potala. I had written to him asking his opinion and—to anticipate a little—it was to the effect that I would be unwise to write.

Clapham Station looked dirtier and dingier than ever, in my unhappy state of mind. I walked down the ramp to the street, and went home. My wife took one glance at my face and asked no questions. After a meal, although I did not feel like eating, she said: "I telephoned Mr. B this morning. He says you should do a synopsis and take it for him to see." Synopsis! The mere thought sickened me.

Then I read the mail which had arrived. Two letters saying that "the position had been filled. Thank you for applying," and the letter from my lama friend in France.

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I sat down at the battered old typewriter which I had “inherited” from my predecessor, and started to write.

Writing to me is unpleasant, arduous. There is no “inspiration,” nor have I any gift; I merely work harder than most at a subject, and the more I dislike it, the harder and faster I work so that it is the sooner completed.

The day drew to a weary end, the shadows of dusk filled the streets and were dispelled as the street lamps came on to shed a garish glow over houses and people. My wife switched on the light and drew the curtain. I typed on. At last, with stiff and aching fingers, I stopped. Before me I had a pile of pages, thirty of them, all closely typed. “There!” I exclaimed. “If that does not suit him I will give up the whole thing, and I hope it does not suit him!”

The next afternoon I called on Mr. B again. He looked once more at my papers, then took the synopsis and settled back to read. Every so often he nodded his head approvingly, and when he had finished, said, very cautiously, “I think we may be able to get it placed. Leave it with me. In the meantime write the first chapter.” I did not know whether to be pleased or sorry as I walked down Regent Street towards Piccadilly Circus. Finances had reached a dangerously low point, yet I just hated the thought of writing about myself.

Two days later I received a letter from Mr. B asking me to call, telling me that he had good news for me. My heart sank at the thought, so I was going to have to write that book after all! Mr. B beamed benevolently upon me. “I have a contract for you,” he said, “but first I would like to take you to see the publisher.” Together we went off to another part of London and entered a street which used to be a fashionable district, with high houses. Now the houses were used as offices, and people who should have been living in them lived in remote districts. We walked along the street and stopped at an undistinguished-looking house. “This is it,” said Mr. B. We entered a dark hallway and mounted a curving flight of stairs to the first floor. At last we were shown in to Mr. Publisher, who seemed a little cynical at first, only gradually warming up.

The interview was of short duration and then we were back on the street.

“Come back to my office—dear me! Where are my spectacles?” said Mr. B, feverishly going through his pockets in search of the missing glasses. He sighed with relief as he found them, continuing, “Come back to the office, I have the contract ready to sign.”

At last here was something definite, a contract to write a book. I decided that I would do my part, and hoped that the publisher would do his. Certainly The Third Eye has enabled Mr. Publisher to put “a little jam on it!”

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The book progressed. I did a chapter at a time and took it in to Mr. B. On a number of occasions I visited Mr. and Mrs. B at their charming home, and I would here like particularly to pay tribute to Mrs.

B. She welcomed me, and few English people did that. She encouraged me, and she was the first English woman to do so. At all times she made me welcome, so-thank you, Mrs. B!

My health had been deteriorating rapidly in London's climate. I struggled to hold on while finishing the book, using all my training to put aside illness for a while. With the book finished, I had my first attack of coronary thrombosis and nearly died. At a very famous London hospital the medical staff were puzzled indeed by many things about me, but I did not enlighten them; perhaps this book will!

"You must leave London," said the specialist. "Your life is in danger here. Get away to a different climate."

"Leave London?" I thought. "But where shall we go?"

At home we had a discussion, discussing ways and means and places to live. Several days later I had to return to the hospital for a final check. "When are you going?" asked the specialist. "Your condition will not improve here."

"I just do not know," I replied. "There are so many things to consider."

"There is only one thing to consider," he said impatiently, "Stay here and you will die. Move and you may live a little longer. Do you not understand that your condition is serious?"

Once again I had a heavy problem to face.

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CHAPTER TEN

“Lobsang! Lobsang!” I turned restlessly in my sleep. The pain in my chest was acute, the pain of that clot. Gasping, I returned to consciousness. Returned to hear again, “Lobsang!”

“My!” I thought, “I feel terrible.”

“Lobsang,” the voice went on. “Listen to me, lie back and listen to me.”

I lay back wearily. My heart was pumping and my chest was throbbing in sympathy. Gradually, within the darkness of my lonely room, a figure manifested itself. First a blue glow, turning to yellow, then the materialized form of a man of my own age. “I cannot astral travel tonight,” I said, “or my heart will surely cease to beat and my tasks not yet ended.”

“Brother! We well know your condition, so I have come to you. Listen, you need not talk.” I leaned back against the bed-head, my breath coming in sobbing gasps. It was painful to take a normal breath, yet I had to breathe in order to live.

“We have discussed your problem among us,” said the materialized lama. “There is an island off the English coast, an island which was once part of the lost continent of Atlantis. Go there, go there as quickly as you can. Rest a while in that friendly land before journeying to the continent of North America. Go not to the western shores whose coastline is washed by the turbulent ocean. Go to the green city and then beyond.”

Ireland? Yes! An ideal place. I had always got on well with Irish people. Green city? Then the answer came to me; Dublin, from a great height, looked green because of Phoenix Park and because of the River Liffey flowing from the mountains down to the sea.

The lama smiled approvingly. “You must recover some part of your

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health, for there will be a further attack upon it. We would have you live so that the Task may be advanced, so that the Science of the Aura may come nearer to fruition. I will go now, but when you are a little recovered, it is desired that you visit again the Land of the Golden Light.”

The vision faded from my sight, and my room was the darker for it, and more lonely. My sorrows had been great, my sufferings beyond the ability of most to bear or to understand. I leaned back, gazing unseeingly through the window. What had they said on a recent astral visit to Lhasa? Oh, yes! “You find it difficult to obtain employment? Of course you do, my brother, for you are not part of the Western world, you live on borrowed time. The man whose living space you have taken would have died in any case. Your need, temporarily for his body, more permanently for his living space, meant that he could leave the Earth with honor and with gain. This is not Karma, my brother, but a task which you are doing upon this, your last life on Earth.” A very hard life, too, I told myself. In the morning I was able to cause some consternation or surprise by announcing, “We are going to live in Ireland. Dublin first, then outside Dublin.”

I was not much help in getting things ready, I was very sick, and almost afraid to move for fear of provoking a heart attack. Cases were packed, tickets obtained, and at last we set off. It was good to be in the air again, and I found that breathing was much easier. The airline, with a “heart-case” passenger aboard, took no risks. There was an oxygen cylinder on the rack above my head. The plane flew lower, and circled over a land of vivid green, fringed by milk-white surf. Lower still, and there was the rumble of an undercarriage being lowered, followed shortly by the screech of the tires touching the landing strip.

My thoughts turned to the occasion of my first entry to England, and my treatment by the Customs official. “What will this be like?” I mused. We taxied up to the airport buildings, and I was more than a little mortified to find a wheelchair awaiting me. In Customs the officials looked hard at us and said, “How long are you staying?”

“We have come to live here,” I replied.

There was no trouble, they did not even examine our belongings. The Lady Ku’ei fascinated them all as, serene and self possessed, she stood guard on our luggage. These Siamese cats, when properly trained and treated as beings, not just animals, are possessed of superlative intelligence. Certainly I prefer the Lady Ku’ei’s friendship and loyalty to that of humans; she sits by me at night and awakens my wife if I am ill!

Our luggage was loaded on a taxi, and we were driven off to Dublin city.

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The atmosphere of friendliness was very marked; nothing seemed to be too much trouble. I lay upon my bed in a room overlooking the grounds of Trinity College. On the road below my window, traffic moved at a sedate pace.

It took me some time to recover from the journey, but when I could get about, the friendly officials of Trinity College gave me a pass which enabled me to use their grounds and their magnificent library. Dublin was a city of surprises; one could buy almost anything there. There was a far greater variety of goods than there is in Windsor, Canada, or Detroit, U.S.A. After a few months, while I was writing Doctor from Lhasa, we decided to move to a very beautiful fishing village some twelve miles away. We were fortunate in obtaining a house overlooking Balcadden Bay, a house with a truly amazing view.

I had to rest a very great deal, and found it impossible to see through the windows with binoculars because of the distorting effect of the glass. A local builder, Brud Campbell, with whom I became very friendly, suggested plate glass.

With that installed, I could rest on my bed and watch the fishing boats out in the bay. The whole expanse of harbor was within my view, with the Yacht Club, the harbor master's office and the lighthouse as prominent features. On a clear day I could see the Mountains of Mourne, away in British occupied Ireland, while, from Howth Head, I could dimly see the mountains of Wales far across the Irish Sea.

We bought a secondhand car and often journeyed up into the Dublin Mountains, enjoying the pure air and the beautiful scenery. On one such trip we heard of an elderly Siamese cat who was dying from an immense internal tumor. After much pressure, we managed to take her into our household. The best veterinary surgeon in the whole of Ireland examined her but thought she had only hours to live. I persuaded him to operate to remove the tumor caused by neglect and too many kittens. She recovered, and proved to have the sweetest nature of any person or animal I have ever met. Now, as I write, she is walking round like the gentle old lady she is. Quite blind, her beautiful blue eyes radiate intelligence and goodness. The Lady Ku'ei walks with her, or directs her telepathically so that she does not bump into things or hurt herself. We call her Granny Greywhiskers as she is so much like an elderly granny walking around, enjoying the evening of her life, after raising many families.

Howth brought me happiness, happiness that I had not known before. Mr. Loftus, the policeman, or "Guard" as they are called in Ireland, frequently stopped to chat. He was always a welcome visitor. A big man, as smart as a Guard at Buckingham Palace, he had a reputation for utter fairness and utter fearlessness. He would come in, when off duty, and talk off far-off places. His

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“My God, Doctor, ye’ve brains to throw away!” was a delight to hear. I had been badly treated by the police of many countries, and Guard Loftus, of Howth, Ireland, showed me that there were good policemen as well as the bad which I had known. My heart was showing signs of distress again, and my wife wanted the telephone installed. Unfortunately all the lines of “The Hill” were in use so we could not have one.

One afternoon there came a knock at the door, and a neighbor, Mrs. O’Grady, said, “I hear you want the telephone and cannot get it. Use ours at any time you like—here is a key to the house!” The Irish treated us well. Mr. and Mrs. O’Grady were always trying to do something for us, trying to make our stay in Ireland even more pleasant. It has been our pleasure and our privilege to bring Mrs. O’Grady to our home in Canada for an all too brief visit.

Suddenly, shockingly, I was taken violently ill. The years in prison camps, the immense strains I had undergone, and the unusual experiences had combined to make my heart condition serious indeed. My wife rushed up to the O’Grady’s house and telephoned a doctor to come quickly. In a surprisingly short time, Dr. Chapman came into my bedroom, and with the efficiency that comes only from long years of practice, got busy with his hypodermic!

Dr. Chapman was one of the “old school” of doctors, the “family doctor” who had more knowledge in his little finger than half a dozen of the “factory produced” State aided specimens so popular today. With Dr. Chapman and me it was a case of “friends at first sight!” Slowly, under his care, I recovered enough to get out of bed. Then came a round of visiting specialists in Dublin. Someone in England had told me never to trust myself to an Irish doctor. I did trust myself, and had better medical treatment than in any other country of the world. The personal, the human touch was there, and that is better than all the mechanical coldness of the young doctors.

Brud Campbell had erected a good stone wall round our grounds, replacing a broken one, because we were sorely troubled by trippers from England. People used to come on excursions from Liverpool and enter the gardens of the Howth people and camp there! We had one “tripper” who caused some amusement. One morning there was a loud knock at the door. My wife answered it, and found a German woman outside. She tried to push her way in, but failed. Then she announced that she was going to camp on our doorstep until she was allowed in to “sit at the feet of Lobsang Rampa.” As I was in bed, and certainly did not want anyone sitting at my feet, she was asked to go. By afternoon she was still there. Mr. Loftus came along, looking very fierce and efficient, and persuaded the woman to go down the hill, get on a bus for Dublin, and not come back!

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They were busy days, with me trying not to overtax my strength. Doctor from Lhasa was now completed, but letters were coming in from all over the world. Pat the Postman would come wheezing to the door, after the long climb up the hill. "Ah! Good marnin' to ye," he would say to whoever answered his knock, "And how is Himself today? Ah, sure the letters are breakin' me back!"

One night as I lay upon my bed watching the twinkling lights of Portmarnock, and of the ships far out to sea, I was suddenly aware of an old man sitting gazing at me. He smiled as I turned in his direction. "I have come," he said, "to see how you progress, for it is desired that you go again to the Land of the Golden Light. How do you feel?"

"I think I can manage, with a little effort," I replied.

"Are you coming with me?"

"No," he answered, "for your body is more valuable than ever before, and I am to stay here and guard it."

During the past few months I had suffered greatly. One of the causes of my suffering was a matter which would cause a Westerner to recoil in disbelief; the whole change-over of my original body had taken place. The substitute body had been teleported elsewhere and allowed to fall to dust. For those who are sincerely interested, it is an old Eastern art and can be read about in certain books.

I lay for a few moments, collecting my strength. Outside the window a late fishing boat went phutphutting by. The stars were bright, and Ireland's Eye was bathed in moonlight. The old man smiled and said, "A pleasant view you have here!" I nodded silently, straightened my spine, folded my legs beneath me, and drifted off like a puff of smoke. For a time I hovered above the headland, gazing down at the moonlit countryside. Ireland's Eye, the island just off the coast, farther out the Island of Lambay. Behind glowed the bright lights of Dublin, a modern, well-lit city indeed.

As I rose higher, slowly, I could see the magnificent curve of Killenye Bay, so reminiscent of Naples, and beyond—Greystones and Wicklow. Off I drifted, out of this world, out of this space and time. On, to a plane of existence which cannot be described in the languages of this three-dimensional world.

It was like going from darkness into the sunlight. My Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, was awaiting me. "You have done so well, Lobsang, and have suffered so much," he said. "In a short time you will be returning here not to leave again. The struggle has been worthwhile." We moved together through the glorious countryside, moved to the Hall of Memories where there was much

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yet to learn.

For some time we sat and talked, my Guide, an august group, and I. "Soon," said one, "you will go to the Land of the Red Indians and there we have another task for you. For a few short hours refresh yourself here, for your ordeals of late have sorely taxed your strength."

"Yes," remarked another, "and be not upset by those who would criticize you, for they know not whereof they speak, being blinded by the self imposed ignorance of the West. When Death shall close their eyes, and they become born to the Greater Life, then indeed will they regret the sorrows and troubles they have so needlessly caused."

As I returned to Ireland the land was yet in darkness, with just a few faint streaks shooting across the morning sky. Along the long stretch of sands at Clontarf the surf was breaking with a sighing moan. The Head of Howth loomed up, a darker shape in the predawn darkness. As I floated down, I glanced at our rooftop. "Dear me!" I remarked to myself. "The seagulls have bent my aerial rods. I shall have to call in Brud Campbell to put them straight."

The old man was still sitting by my bedside. Mrs. Fifi Greywhiskers was sitting on the end of my bed as if on guard. As I entered my body and reanimated it, she came up to me, rubbed against me and purred. She uttered a low call, and Lady Ku'ei came in, jumped on the bed and took up her station on my lap. The old man gazed down upon them in marked affection and remarked, "Truly entities of a high order. I must go, my brother."

The morning post brought a savage assessment from the Irish Income Tax Office. The only Irish people I dislike are those connected with the Tax Office; they seemed to me to be so unhelpful, so unnecessarily officious. For writers in Ireland, the tax is absolutely penal, and it is a tragedy, because Ireland could well do with those who would spend money. Tax or no tax, I would rather live in Ireland than in any other place in the world except Tibet.

"We will go to Canada," I said. Gloomy looks greeted that statement. "How will we take the cats?" I was asked.

"By air, of course, they will travel with us," I answered.

The formalities were considerable, the delays long. The Irish officials were helpful in the extreme, the Canadians not at all helpful. The American Consulate offered far more help than did the Canadian. We were fingerprinted and investigated, then we went for our medical examinations. I failed. "Too many scars," said the doctor. "You will have to be X-rayed." The Irish doctor who X-rayed me looked at me with compassion. "You must have had a terrible

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life," he said. "Those scars . . . ! I shall have to report my findings to the Canadian Board of Health. In view of your age I anticipate that they will admit you to Canada, subject to certain conditions."

The Lady Ku'ei and Mrs. Fifi Greywhiskers were examined by a veterinary surgeon and both pronounced fit. While waiting for a ruling about my case, we made enquiries about taking the cats on the plane with us. Only Swissair would agree, so we provisionally booked with them.

Days later I was called to the Canadian Embassy. A man looked at me sourly. "You are sick!" he said. "I have to be sure that you will not be a charge on the country." He fiddled and fiddled, and then, as if with immense effort, said, "Montreal has authorized your entry provided you report to the Board of Health immediately you arrive, and take whatever treatment they say you need. If you don't agree, you can't go," he said, hopefully. It seemed very strange to me that so many Embassy officials in other countries are so needlessly offensive; after all, they are merely hired servants, one cannot always call them "civil servants!"

We kept our intentions private; only our closest friends knew that we were going and knew where we were going. As we knew to our cost, it was almost a case that if we sneezed, a press reporter would come hammering at the door to ask why. For the last time we drove around Dublin, and around the beauty spots of Howth. It was indeed a wrench to even think of leaving, but none of us are here for pleasure. A very efficient firm in Dublin had agreed to drive us to Shannon in a bus, us, the cats, and our luggage.

A few days before Christmas we were ready to go. Our old friend Mr. Loftus came to say good-bye, and to see us off. If there were not tears in his eyes, then I was much mistaken. Certainly I felt that I was parting from a very dear friend. Mr. and Mrs. O'Grady came to see us, Mr. O'Grady taking the day off for that purpose. "Ve O'G" was openly upset, Paddy was trying to hide his emotion with a show of joviality which deceived no one. I locked the door, gave the key to Mr. O'Grady to mail to the solicitor, got in the bus and we drove away from the happiest time of my life since I left Tibet, drove away from the nicest group of people I had met in long, long years.

The bus rushed along the smooth highway to Dublin, threading through the city's courteous traffic. On, and into open country skirting the mountains. For hours we drove on, the friendly driver, efficient at his task, pointing out landmarks and being solicitous of our welfare and comfort.

We stopped half way for tea. The Lady Ku'ei likes to sit up high and watch the traffic and yell encouragement to whoever is driving her. Mrs. Fifi

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Greywhiskers prefers to sit quietly and think. With the bus stopped for tea, there was great consternation. Why had we stopped? Was everything all right?

We continued on, for the road was long and Shannon far distant. Darkness came upon us and slowed us somewhat. Late in the evening we arrived at Shannon Airport, left our main luggage, and were driven to the accommodation we had booked for the night and the next day. Because of my health and the two cats we stayed at Shannon a night and a day, leaving on the next night. We had a room each, fortunately they had communicating doors, because the cats did not know where they wanted to be. For a time they wandered around, sniffing like vacuum cleaners, "reading" all about people who had previously used the rooms, then they fell silent and were soon asleep.

I rested the next day, and looked round the Airport. The "Duty-Free" Shop interested me, but I could not see the use of it; if one bought an article one had to declare it somewhere and then pay duty, so what was the gain?

The Swissair officials were helpful and efficient, the formalities were soon completed and all we waited for was the plane. Midnight came and went, one o'clock. At one-thirty we were taken aboard a big Swissair plane, we, and our two cats. People were most impressed by them, by their self-control and composure. Not even the noise of the engines disturbed them. Soon we were speeding along the runway faster and faster. The land dropped away, the River Shannon flowed briefly beneath a wing and was gone. Before us the wide Atlantic surged, leaving a white surf along the coast of Ireland. The engine note changed, long flames trailed from the glowing exhaust pipes. The nose tilted slightly. The two cats looked silently at me; was there anything to worry about, they wondered. This was my seventh Atlantic crossing, and I smiled reassuringly at them. Soon they curled up and went to sleep.

The long night wore on. We were traveling with the darkness, for us the night would be some twelve hours of darkness. The cabin lights dimmed, leaving us with the blue glow and a faint prospect of sleep. The droning engines carried us on, on at thirty-five thousand feet above the gray, restless sea. Slowly the pattern of stars changed.

Slowly a faint lightening was observed in the distant sky on the edge of the Earth's curve. Bustling movement in the galley, the clatter of dishes, then, slowly, like a plant growing, came the lights. The amiable Purser came walking through, ever attentive to his passengers' comfort. The efficient cabin crew came round with breakfast. There is no nation like the Swiss for efficiency in the air, for attending to the passengers' wants, and for providing truly excellent food. The cats sat up and were all attention at the thought of eating again.

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Far off to the right a hazy gray line appeared and rapidly grew larger. New York! Inevitably I thought of the first time I had come to America, working my way as a ship's engineer. Then the skyscrapers of Manhattan had towered heavenwards, impressing with their size. Now, where were they? Not those little dots, surely? The great plane circled, and a wing dipped. The engines changed their pitch. Gradually we sank lower and lower. Gradually buildings on the ground took shape, what had appeared to be a desolate waste resolved itself into Idlewild International Airport.

The skilled Swiss Pilot set the plane down with just a faint scrunch of tires. Gently we taxied along the runway to the Airport buildings. "Keep your seats, please!" said the Purser. A gentle "thud" as the mobile stairway came to rest against the fuselage, a metallic scraping, and the cabin door was swung open. "Good-bye," said the cabin crew, lining the exit, "Travel with us again!" Slowly we filed down the stairway and into the Administrative Buildings. Idlewild was like a railway station gone mad. People rushed everywhere, jostling any that stood in their path.

An attendant stepped forward, "This way, Customs clearance first." We were lined up by the side of moving platforms. Great masses of luggage suddenly appeared, moving along the platforms, stretching from the entrance to the Customs man. The Officials walked along, rummaging through open cases. "Where you from, folks?" said an Officer to me.

"Dublin, Ireland," I replied.

"Where you going?"

"Windsor, Canada," I said.

"Okay, got any pornographic pictures?" he asked suddenly.

With him settled, we had to show Passports and Visas. It reminded me of a Chicago meat packing factory, the way people were "processed."

Before we left Ireland we had booked seats on an American plane to fly us to Detroit. They agreed to take the cats in the plane with us. Now the officials of the Airline concerned repudiated our tickets, and refused to take our two cats who had crossed the Atlantic without trouble or fuss. For a time it seemed that we were stuck in New York, the Airline was not remotely interested. I saw an advertisement for "Air taxis to anywhere" from La Guardia Airfield.

Taking an airport limousine we went the several miles to a Motel just outside La Guardia. "Can we bring in our cats?" we asked the man at the registration desk. He looked at them, two demure little ladies, and said, "Sure, sure, they're welcome!" The Lady Ku'ei and Mrs. Fifi Greywhiskers were glad

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indeed to have a chance to walk about and investigate two more rooms.

The strain of the journey was now telling upon me. I retired to bed. My wife crossed the road to La Guardia, trying to find what an air taxi would cost, and when we could be taken. Eventually she returned looking worried.

“It is going to cost a lot of money!” she said.

“Well, we cannot stay here, we have to move,” I replied.

She picked up the telephone and soon arranged that on the morrow we would fly by air taxi to Canada. We slept well that night. The cats were quite unconcerned, it even seemed that they were enjoying themselves.

In the morning, after breakfast, we were driven across the road to the Airport. La Guardia is immense, with a plane taking off or landing every minute of the day. At last we found the place from whence we were to go, and we, our cats, and our luggage were loaded aboard a small twin-engined plane. The pilot, a little man with a completely shaven head, nodded curtly to us, and off we taxied to a runway. For some two miles we taxied and then pulled in to a bay to wait our turn to take off. The pilot of a big intercontinental plane waved to us, and spoke hurriedly into his microphone. Our pilot uttered some words which I cannot repeat, and said, “We have a — puncture.”

The air was rent by a screaming police siren. A police cruiser raced madly along a service road and pulled up alongside us with a mad squeal of tires. “Police? What have we done now?” I asked myself. More sirens, and the fire brigade arrived, men spilling off as the machines slowed. The policemen came across and spoke to our pilot. They moved away to the fire engine, and at last the police and firemen moved off. A repair car raced along, jacked up the plane in which we were sitting, removed the offending wheel and raced off. For two hours we sat there waiting for the wheel to be returned to us. At last the wheel was on, the pilot started his engines again, and we took off. Off we flew, over the Alleghany range, headed first for Pittsburg.

Right over the mountains the fuel gauge, right in front of me, dropped to zero and started knocking against the stop. The pilot seemed blandly unaware of it. I pointed it out and he said, in a whisper, “Ah, sure, we can always go down!” Minutes after we came to a level space in the mountains, a space where many light planes were parked.

The pilot circled once, and landed, taxiing along to the petrol pumps. We stopped just long enough to have the plane refuelled, and then off again from the snow-covered, frozen runway. Deep banks of snow lined the sides, great drifts were in the valleys. A short flight, and we were over Pittsburg. We

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were sick of traveling, stiff and weary. Only the Lady Ku'ei was alert, she sat and looked out of a window and appeared pleased with everything.

With Cleveland beneath us, we saw Lake Erie right in front. Great masses of ice were piled up, while fantastic cracks and fissures ran across the frozen lake. The pilot, taking no risks, made course for Pelee Island, half way across the lake. From there he flew on to Amherstburg, and on to Windsor Airport. The Airport looked strangely quiet. There was no bustle of activity. We moved up to the Customs Building, alighted from the plane, and went inside.

A solitary Customs man was just going off duty—it was after six at night. Gloomily he contemplated our baggage. "There is no Immigration Officer here," he said. "You will have to wait until one comes." We sat and waited. The slow minutes crawled by. Half an hour, time itself seemed to stand still, we had had no food or drink since eight o'clock that morning. The clock struck seven. A relief Customs man came in and dawdled about. "I can't do a thing until the Immigration Officer has cleared you," he said. Time seemed to be going more slowly. Seven-thirty. A tall man came in and went to the Immigration Officer's office.

Looking frustrated and a little red in the face, he came out to the Customs man. "I can't get the desk open," he said. For a time they muttered together, trying keys, banging, pushing. At last, in desperation, they took a screw-driver and forced the desk lock. It was the wrong desk, it was quite empty. Eventually the forms were found. Wearily we filled them in, signing here, signing there. The Immigration Officer stamped our Passports "Landed Immigrant".

"Now you go to the Customs Officer," he said. Cases to open, boxes to unlock. Forms to show, giving details of our belongings as "Settlers." More rubber stamps, and at last we were free to enter Canada at Windsor, Ontario. The Customs Officer warmed up considerably when he knew we came from Ireland. Of Irish descent himself, with his Irish parents still living, he asked many questions and—wonder of wonders—he helped carry our luggage to the waiting car.

Outside the Airport it was bitter, the snow was thick upon the ground. Just across the Detroit River the skyscrapers towered aloft, a mass of light as all the offices and rooms were illuminated, for Christmas was at hand.

We drove down the wide Ouellette Avenue, the main street of Windsor. The River was invisible, and it looked as if we were going to drive straight to America. The fellow who was driving us did not seem at all sure of his directions; missing a main intersection, he made a remarkable maneuver which made our hair stand on end. Eventually we reached our rented house and were

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glad indeed to alight. Very soon I had a communication from the Board of Health demanding my presence, threatening terrible things—including deportation—if I did not attend. Unfortunately threats seem to be the main hobby of the Ontario officials, that is why we are now going to move again, to a more friendly Province.

At the Board of Health I was X-rayed, more details were taken, and at last I was allowed to go home again. Windsor has a terrible climate, and that and the attitude of officials soon decided us to move as soon as this book is written. Now the Rampa Story is finished. The truth has been told, as in my other two books. I have much that I could tell the Western world, for in astral traveling I have touched merely upon the fringe of things which are possible. Why send out spy planes with its attendant risks when one can travel in the astral and see inside a council chamber? One can see and one can remember. Under certain circumstances one can teleport articles, if it be wholly for good. But Western man scoffs at things he does not understand, yells “faker” to those who have abilities which he himself does not possess, and works himself into a frenzy of vituperation against those who dare to be in any way “different.” Happily I put aside my typewriter and settled down to entertain the Lady Ku’ei and blind Mrs. Fifi Greywhiskers who both had waited so patiently.

That night, telepathically, came the Message again. “Lobsang! You have not yet finished your book!” My heart sank, I hated writing, knowing that so few people had the capacity to perceive Truth. I write of the things which the human mind can accomplish. Even the elementary stages described in this book will be disbelieved, yet if one were to be told that the Russians had sent a man to Mars, that would be believed! Man is afraid of the powers of Man’s mind, and can contemplate only the worthless things like rockets and space satellites. Better results can be achieved through mental processes.

“Lobsang! Truth? Do you remember the Hebrew tale? Write it down, Lobsang, and write also of what could be, in Tibet!”

A Rabbi, famed for his learning and his wit, was once asked why he so often illustrated a great truth by telling a simple story. “That,” said the wise Rabbi, “can best be illustrated by a parable! A parable about Parable. There was a time when Truth went among people unadorned, as naked as Truth. Whoever saw Truth turned away in fear or in shame because they could not face him. Truth wandered among the peoples of the Earth, unwelcome, rebuffed, and unwanted. One day, friendless and alone, he met Parable strolling happily along, dressed in fine and many colored clothes. ‘Truth, why are you so sad, so miserable?’ asked Parable, with a cheerful smile. ‘Because I am so old and so ugly that people avoid me,’ said Truth, dourly. ‘Nonsense!’ laughed

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Parable. 'That is not why people avoid you. Borrow some of my clothes, go among people and see what happens.' So Truth donned some of Parable's lovely garments, and wherever he now went he was welcome."

The wise old Rabbi smiled and said, "Men cannot face naked Truth, they much prefer him disguised in the clothing of Parable."

"Yes, yes, Lobsang, that is a good translation of our thoughts, now the Tale."

The cats wandered off to sit on their beds and wait until I really had finished. I picked up the typewriter again, inserted the paper, and continued . . .

From afar the Watcher sped, gleaming a ghostly blue as he flashed over continents and oceans, leaving the sunlit side of the Earth for the dark. In his astral state he could be seen only to those who were clairvoyant, yet he could see all and, returning later to his body, remember all. He dropped, immune to cold, untroubled by thinness of air, to the shelter of a high peak, and waited.

The first rays of the morning sun glinted briefly on the highest pinnacles of rock, turning them to gold, reflecting a myriad of colors from the snow in the crevices. Vague streaks of light shot across the lightening sky as slowly the sun peeped across the distant horizon.

Down in the valley strange things were happening. Carefully shielded lights moved about, as if on trailers. The silver thread of the Happy River gleamed faintly, throwing back flecks of light. There was much activity, strange, concealed activity. The lawful inhabitants of Lhasa hid in their homes, or lay under guard in the forced-labor barracks.

Gradually the sun moved upon its path. Soon the first rays, probing downwards, glinted upon a strange shape that loomed up far across the Valley floor. As the sunlight grew brighter the Watcher saw the immense shape more clearly. It was huge, cylindrical, and on its pointed end, facing the heavens above, were painted eyes and a toothensnagged mouth. For centuries the Chinese seamen had painted eyes upon their ships. Now, upon this Monster the eyes glared hatefully.

The sun moved on. Soon the whole Valley was bathed in light. Strange metal structures were being towed away from the Monster, now only partly enshrouded in its cradle. The immense rocket, towering on its fins, looked sinister, deadly. At its base technicians with headphones on were running about like a colony of disturbed ants. A siren sounded shrilly, and the echoes rebounded, from rock to rock, from mountain wall to mountain wall, blending into a fearful, horrendous cacophony of sound which built up, becoming louder

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and louder. Soldiers, guards, laborers, turned on the instant and ran as fast as they could to the shelter of the distant rocks.

Halfway up the mountain side the light glinted on a little group of men clustered around radio equipment. A man picked up a microphone and spoke to the inhabitants of a great concrete and steel shelter lying half concealed about a mile from the rocket. A droning voice counted out the seconds and then stopped.

For scant moments nothing happened, there was peace. The lazy tendrils of vapor seeping from the rocket were the only things that moved. A gush of steam, and a roaring that grew louder and louder, starting small rock-falls. The earth itself seemed to vibrate and groan. The sound became louder and louder until it seemed that the eardrums must shatter under such intensity. A great gout of flame and steam appeared from the base of the rocket, obscuring all below. Slowly, as if with immense, with stupendous effort, the rocket rose. At one time it seemed to be standing stationary on its tail of fire, then it gathered speed and climbed up into the quaking heavens, booming and roaring defiance to mankind. Up, up it went, leaving a long train of steam and smoke. The scream vibrated among the mountain tops long after all sight of it had gone.

The group of technicians on the mountainside feverishly watched their radarscopes, yammered into their microphones, or scanned the skies with high-power binoculars. Far, far overhead a vagrant gleam of light flashed down as the mighty rocket turned and settled on its course. Scared faces appeared from behind rocks. Little groups of people congregated, with all distinction between guards and slave-laborers temporarily forgotten. The minutes ticked on. Technicians switched off their radar sets, for the rocket had soared far beyond their range. The minutes ticked on.

Suddenly the technicians leapt to their feet, gesticulating madly, forgetting to switch on the microphones in their excitement. The rocket, with an atomic warhead, had landed in a far distant, peace-loving country. The land was a shambles, with cities wrecked, and people vaporized to incandescent gas. The Chinese Communists, with the loudspeakers full on, screamed and shouted with glee, forgetting all reserve in the joy of their dreadful accomplishment. The first stage of war had ended, the second was about to start. Exulting technicians rushed to make the second rocket ready.

Is it fantasy? It could be fact! The higher the launching point of a rocket; the less the atmosphere impedes it and so it takes far, far less fuel. A rocket launched from the flat lands of Tibet, seventeen thousand feet above sea level, would be more efficient than one launched from the lowlands. So the Communists have an incalculable advantage over the rest of the world, they have the

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highest and most efficient sites from which to launch rockets either into space or at other countries.

China has attacked Tibet—not conquered it— so that she shall have this great advantage over Western powers. China has attacked Tibet so that she shall have access to India, when she is ready, and perhaps drive on through India to Europe. It could be that China and Russia will combine to make a pincer thrust which could crush out the free life of all countries that stood in their way. It could be, unless something is done soon. Poland? Pearl Harbor? Tibet? “Experts” would have said that such enormities could not be. They were wrong! Are they going to be wrong again?

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BOOK FOUR: Cave Of The Ancients

FOREWORD

This is a book about the Occult, and about the powers of Man. It is a simple book in that there are no “foreign words,” no Sanskrit, nothing of dead languages. The average person wants to KNOW things, does not want to guess at words which the average Author does not understand either! If an Author knows his job he can write in English without having to disguise lack of knowledge by use of a foreign language.

Too many people get caught up in mumbo jumbo. The laws of Life are simple indeed; there is no need at all to dress them up with mystic cults or pseudo religions. Nor is there need for anyone to claim “divine revelations.” ANYONE can have the same “revelations” if they work for it.

No one religion holds the Keys of Heaven, nor will one be forever damned because he enters a church with his hat on instead of his shoes off. In Tibet lamasery entrances bear the inscription “A thousand monks, a thousand religions.” Believe what you will; if it embraces “do as you would be done by” you will get by when the final Call comes.

Some say that Inner Knowledge can only be obtained by joining this cult or that cult, and paying a substantial subscription too. The Laws of Life say, ‘Seek, and you shall find.’

This book is the fruit of a long life, training culled from the greater Lamaseries of Tibet and from powers which were gained by a very close adherence to the Laws. This is knowledge taught by the Ancients of old, and is written in the Pyramids of Egypt, in the High Temples of the Andes, and the greatest repository of Occult knowledge in the world: the Highlands of Tibet.

T. LOBSANG RAMPA

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CHAPTER ONE

The evening was warm, deliciously, unusually warm for the time of the year. Gently rising on the windless air, the sweet scent of incense gave tranquility to our mood. Far away the sun was setting in a blaze of glory behind the high peaks of the Himalayas, tinting the snow-clad mountain tops a blood red as if in warning of the blood which would drench Tibet in the days to come.

Lengthening shadows crept slowly towards the City of Lhasa from the twin peaks of the Potala and our own Chakpori. Below us, to the right, a be-lated caravan of traders from India wended their way to the Pargo Kaling, or Western Gate. The last of the devout pilgrims hurried with unseemly haste on their circuit of the Lingkor Road, as if afraid of being overtaken by the velvet darkness of the fast approaching night.

The Kyi Chu, or Happy River, ran merrily along on its endless journey to the sea, throwing up bright flashes of light as tribute to the dying day. The City of Lhasa was agleam with the golden glow of butter lamps. From the nearby Potala a trumpet sounded at the end of the day, its notes rolling and echoing across the Valley, rebounding from rock surfaces, and returning to us with altered timbre.

I gazed at the familiar scene, gazed across at the Potala, hundreds of windows atwinkle as monks of all degrees went about their business at the close of the day. At the top of the immense building, by the Golden Tombs, a solitary figure, lonely and remote, stood watching. As the last rays of the sun sank below the mountain ranges, a trumpet sounded again, and the sound of deep chanting rose from the Temple below. Swiftly the last vestiges of light faded; swiftly the stars in the sky became a blaze of jewels set in a purple background. A meteor flashed across the sky and flared into a burst of final flaming glory before falling to the Earth as a pinch of smoking dust.

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"A beautiful night, Lobsang!" said a well-loved voice.

"A beautiful night, indeed," I replied as I swiftly rose to my feet in order that I might bow to the Lama Mingyar Dondup. He sat by the side of a wall and motioned for me to sit also.

Pointing upwards, he said, "Do you realize that people, you, and I, may look like that?"

I gazed at him dumbly, how could I look like stars in the night sky. The Lama was a big man, handsome, and with a noble head. Even so, he did not look like a collection of stars. He laughed at my bemused expression. "Literal as usual, Lobsang, literal as usual," he smiled. "I meant to imply that things are not always what they seem. If you wrote 'Om! ma-ne-pad-me Hum' so large that it filled the whole Valley of Lhasa people would not be able to read it, it would be too large for them to grasp." He stopped and looked at me to make sure that I was following his explanation and then continued. "In the same way the stars are 'so large' that we cannot determine what they really form."

I looked at him as if he had taken leave of his senses. The stars forming something? They were— well—stars! Then I thought of writing so large that it filled the Valley, and so became unreadable because of its size.

The gentle voice went on. "Think of yourself shrinking, shrinking, becoming as small as a grain of sand. How would I look to you then? Suppose you became even smaller, so small that the grain of sand was as large as a world to you. Then what would you see of me?" He stopped and looked piercingly at me. "Well?" he asked "what would you see?" I sat there and gaped, brain paralyzed at the thought, mouth open like a newly landed fish.

"You would see, Lobsang," the Lama said, "a group of widely dispersed worlds floating in darkness. Because of your small size you would see the molecules of my body as separate worlds with immense space in between. You would see worlds rotating around worlds, you would see 'suns' which were the molecules of certain psychic centers, you would see a universe!"

My brain creaked, I would almost swear that the 'machinery' above my eyebrows gave a convulsive shudder with all the effort I was expending in order to follow all this strange, exciting knowledge.

My guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup reached forward and gently raised my chin. "Lobsang!" he chuckled, "your eyes are becoming crossed with the effort to follow me." He sat back, laughing, and gave me a few moments in which to recover somewhat. Then he said, "Look at the material of your robe. Feel it!" I did so, feeling remarkably foolish as I gazed at the tattered old gar-

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ment I wore. The Lama remarked, "It is cloth, somewhat smooth to the touch. You cannot see through it. But imagine seeing it through a glass which magnified it by ten. Think of the thick strands of yak wool, each strand ten times thicker than you see it here. You would be able to see light between the strands. But magnify it by a million and you would be able to ride a horse through it, except that each strand would be too huge to climb over!"

It made sense to me, now that it was pointed out. I sat and thought, nodding, as the Lama said, "Like a decrepit old woman!"

"Sir!" I said at last, "then all life is a lot of space sprinkled with worlds."

"Not quite so simple as that," he replied, "but sit more comfortably and I will tell you a little of the Knowledge we discovered in the Cave of the Ancients."

"Cave of the Ancients!" I exclaimed, full of avid curiosity, "you were going to tell me about that and the Expedition!"

"Yes! Yes!" he soothed, "so I will, but first let us deal with Man and Life as the Ancients in the days of Atlantis believed them to be."

I was secretly far more interested in the Cave of the Ancients which an expedition of high lamas had discovered, and which contained fabulous stores of knowledge and artifacts from an age when the Earth was very young. Knowing my Guide as well as I did, I knew that it would be useless to expect to be told the story until he was ready, and that was not yet. Above us the stars shone in all their glory, hardly dimmed by the rare, pure air of Tibet. In the Temples and Lamaseries the lights were fading one by one.

From afar, carried on the night air, came the plaintive wail of a dog, and the answering barks of those in the Village of Sho below us. The night was calm, placid even, and no clouds drifted across the face of the newly risen moon. Prayer flags hung limp and lifeless at their masts. From somewhere came the faint clacking of a Prayer Wheel as some devout monk, encased in superstition and not aware of Reality, twirled the Wheel in the vain hope of gaining the favour of the Gods.

The Lama, my Guide, smiled at the sound and said, "To each according to his belief, to each according to his need. The trappings of ceremonial religion are a solace to many, we should not condemn those who have not yet traveled far enough upon the Path, nor are able to stand without crutches. I am going to tell you, Lobsang, of the nature of Man."

I felt very close to this Man, the only one who had ever shown me consideration and love. I listened carefully in order to justify his faith in me. At

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least, that is how I started, but I soon found the subject to be fascinating, and then I listened with unconcealed eagerness.

“The whole world is made of vibrations, all Life, all that is inanimate, consists of vibrations. Even the mighty Himalayas,” said the Lama, “are just a mass of suspended particles in which no particle can touch the other. The world, the Universe, consists of minute particles of matter around which other particles of matter whirl. Just as our Sun has worlds circling around it, always keeping their distance, never touching, so is everything that exists composed of whirling worlds.” He stopped and gazed at me, perhaps wondering if all this was beyond my understanding, but I could follow it with ease.

He continued, “The ghosts that we clairvoyants see in the Temple are people, living people, who have left this world and entered into a state where their molecules are so widely dispersed that the ‘ghost’ can walk through the densest wall without touching a single molecule of that wall.”

“Honourable Master,” I said, “why do we feel a tingle when a ‘ghost’ brushes past us?”

“Every molecule, every little ‘sun and planet’ system is surrounded by an electric charge, not the sort of electricity which Man generates with machines, but a more refined type. The electricity which we see shimmering across the sky some nights. Just as the Earth has the Northern Lights, or Aurora Borealis flickering at the Poles, so has the meanest particle of matter its ‘Northern Lights.’ A ‘ghost’ coming too close to us imparts a mild shock to our aura, and so we get this tingle.”

About us the night was still, not a breath of wind disturbed the quiet; there was a silence that one knows only in such countries as Tibet. “The aura, then, that we see, is that an electric charge?” I asked.

“Yes!” replied my Guide the Lama Mingyar Dondup. “In countries outside of Tibet, where wires carrying electric current at high voltages are strung across the land, a ‘corona effect’ is observed and recognized by electrical engineers. In this ‘corona effect’ the wires appear to be surrounded by a corona or aura of bluish light. It is observed mostly on dark, misty nights, but is of course there all the time for those who can see.” He looked at me reflectively. “When you go to Chungking to study medicine you will use an instrument which charts the electrical waves of the brain. All Life, all that exists, is electricity and vibration.”

“Now I am puzzled!” I replied, “for how can Life be vibration and electricity? I can understand one, but not both.”

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“But my dear Lobsang!” laughed the Lama, “there can be no electricity without vibration, without movement! It is movement which generates electricity, therefore the two are intimately related.” He saw my puzzled frown and with his telepathic powers read my thoughts. “No!” he said, “just any vibration will not do! Let me put it to you in this way; imagine a truly vast musical keyboard stretching from here to infinity. The vibration which we regard as solid will be represented by one note on that keyboard. The next might represent sound and the next again will represent sight. Other notes will indicate feelings, senses, purposes, for which we have no understanding while upon this Earth. A dog can hear higher notes than can a human, and a human can hear lower notes than can a dog. Words could be said to the dog in high tones which he could hear and the human would know nothing of it. So can people of the so-called Spirit World communicate with those yet upon this Earth, when the Earthling has the special gift of clairaudience.”

The Lama paused and laughed lightly, “I’m keeping you from your bed, Lobsang but you shall have the morning off in order to recover.” He motioned upwards toward the stars glittering so brightly in the clear, clear air. “Since visiting the Cave of the Ancients and trying the wonderful instruments there, instruments preserved intact since the days of Atlantis, I have often amused myself with a whimsy. I like to think of two small sentient creatures, smaller even than the smallest virus. It does not matter what shape they are, just agree that they are intelligent and have super-super instruments. Image them standing upon an open space of their own infinitesimal world (just as we are now!) ‘My! It is a beautiful night!’ exclaimed Ay, staring intently upwards at the sky. ‘Yes,’ replied Beh, ‘it makes one wonder at the purpose of Life, what are we, where are we going?’ Ay pondered, gazing at the stars sweeping across the heavens in endless allay. ‘Worlds without limit, millions, billions of them. I wonder how many are inhabited?’ ‘Nonsense! Sacrilege! Ridiculous!’ stuttered Beh, ‘you know there is no life except upon this our world, for do not the Priests tell us that we are made in the Image of God? And how can there be other life unless it is exactly like ours—no, it is impossible, you are losing your wits!’ Ay muttered bad-temperedly to himself as he strode off, ‘They could be wrong, you know, they could be wrong!’”

The Lama Mingyar Dondup smiled across at me and said, “I even have a sequel to it! Here it is: “In some distant laboratory, with a science undreamed of by us, where microscopes of fantastic power were available, two scientists were working. One sat hunched up at a bench, eyes glued to the super-super microscope through which he gazed. Suddenly he started, pushing back his stool with a noisy scrape upon the polished floor, ‘Look, Chan!’ he called to his Assistant, ‘Come and look at this!’ Chan rose to his feet, walked across to his

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excited Superior and sat down before the microscope. 'I have a millionth of a grain of lead sulphide on the slide,' said the Superior, 'glance at it!' Chan adjusted the controls and whistled with startled surprise. 'My!' he exclaimed, 'it is just like looking at the Universe through a telescope. Blazing sun, orbiting planets . . . !' The Superior spoke wistfully, 'I wonder if we shall have enough magnification to see down to an individual world; I wonder if there is life there!' 'Nonsense!' said Chan brusquely, 'of course there is no sentient life. There cannot be, for do not the Priests say that we are made in the Image of God, how can there be intelligent Life there?'"

Over us the stars wheeled on their course, endless, eternal. Smiling, the Lama Mingyar Dondup reached into his robe and brought forth a box of matches, treasure brought all the way from far-off India. Slowly he extracted one match and held it up. "I will show you Creation, Lobsang!" he said gaily. Deliberately he drew the match head across the igniting surface of the box, and as it flared into life, he held up the blazing sliver. Then blew it out! "Creation, and dissolution," he said. "The flaring match head emitted thousands of particles each exploding away from its fellows. Each was a separate world, the whole was a Universe. And the Universe died when the flame was extinguished. Can you say that there was no life on those worlds?"

I looked dubiously at him, not knowing what to say, "If they were worlds, Lobsang, and had life upon them, to that Life the worlds would have lasted for millions of years. Are we just a stricken match? Are we living here, with our joys and sorrows— mostly sorrows—thinking that this is a world without end? Think about it, and we will talk some more tomorrow." He rose to his feet and was gone from my sight.

I stumbled across the roof and groped blindly for the top of the ladder leading down. Our ladders were different from those used in the Western world, consisting of notched poles. I found the first notch, the second, and the third, then my foot slipped where someone had spilled butter from a lamp. Down I crashed, landing at the foot in a tangled heap, seeing more "stars" than there were in the sky above and raising many protests from sleeping monks. A hand appeared through the darkness and gave me a cuff that made bells ring in my head. Quickly I leaped to my feet and sped away into the safety of the enshrouding darkness.

As quietly as possible I found a place in which to sleep, wrapped my robe around me and loosed my hold on consciousness. Not even the "shushshush" of hurrying feet disturbed me, nor did the conches or silver bells interrupt my dreams.

The morning was far advanced when I was awakened by someone en-

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thusiastically kicking me. Blearily I peered up into the face of a hulking chela, "Wake up Wake up! By the Sacred Dagger, you're a lazy dog!" He kicked me again—hard. I reached out, grabbed his foot and twisted. With a bone-shaking jar he fell to the floor yelling, "The Lord Abbot! The Lord Abbot! He wants to see you, you cross grained idiot!" Giving him a kick to make up for the many he had given me, I straightened my robe and hurried off. "No food-no breakfast!" I mumbled to myself "why does everyone want me just when it is time to eat?" Racing along the endless corridors, swinging round corners, I almost gave heart-failure to a few old monks doddering around, but I reached the Lord Abbot's room in record time. Rushing in I dropped to my knees and made my bows of respects.

The Lord Abbot was perusing my Record and at one time I heard a hastily suppressed chuckle. "Ah!" he said, "the wild young man who falls over cliffs, greases the bottom of stilts, and causes more commotion than anyone else here." He paused and looked sternly at me; "But you have studied well, extraordinarily well," he said. "Your metaphysical abilities are of such a high order, and you are so far advanced in your academic work that I am going to have you specially and individually taught by the Great Lama, Mingyar Dondup. You are given an unprecedented opportunity by the express command of His Holiness. Now report to the Lama your Guide."

Dismissing me with a wave of his hand, the Lord Abbot turned again to his papers. Relieved that none of my numerous "sins" had been found out, I hurried off. My Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, was sitting waiting for me. Eyeing me keenly as I entered, he said, "Have you broken your fast?"

"No, Sir," I said, "the Reverend Lord Abbot sent for me while I was yet asleep—I am hungry!"

He laughed at me and said, "Ah! I thought you had a woebegone look as if you were being ill used. Be off with you, get your breakfast and then return here."

I needed no urging—I was hungry and did not like it. Little did I know then, although it had been predicted!, that hunger was to follow me through many years of my life.

Refreshed by a good breakfast, but chastened in spirit at the thought of more hard work, I returned to the Lama Mingyar Dondup. He rose to his feet as I entered.

"Come!" he said, "we are going to spend a week at the Potala." Leading the way, he strode out of the Hall and out to where a groom-monk was waiting with two horses. Gloomily I surveyed the horse allotted to me. Even more

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gloomily he stared at me, thinking less of me than I of him. With a feeling of impending doom I mounted the horse and hung on. Horses were terrible creatures, unsafe, temperamental, and without brakes. Horse riding was the least of any accomplishment that I might have possessed. We jogged down the mountainous path from Chakpori.

Crossing the Mani Lakhang road, with the Pargo Kaling on our right, we soon entered the Village of Sho, where my Guide made a brief stop, then we toiled up the steep steps of the Potala. Riding a horse up steps is an unpleasant experience, and my main concern was not to fall off! Monks, lamas and visitors, an unceasing throng of them were trudging up and down the Steps, some stopping to admire the view, others who had been received by the Dalai Lama Himself thought only of that interview. At the top of the Steps we stopped, and I slid gratefully but ungracefully from my horse. He, poor fellow, gave a whinny of disgust and turned his back on me!

On we walked, climbing ladder after ladder until we reached the high level of the Potala where the Lama Mingyar Dondup had permanent rooms allotted to him near the Room of Sciences. Strange devices from countries the world over were in that Room, but the strangest devices of all were those from the remotest past. So, at last we reached our destination, and I settled for a time in what was now my room.

From my window, high up in the Potala, only one floor lower than the Dalai Lama, I could look out upon Lhasa, upon the Valley. Far off I could see the great Cathedral (Jo Kang) with golden roof agleam. The Ring Road, or Lingkor, stretched away in the distance, making a complete circuit of Lhasa City. Devout pilgrims thronged it, all coming to offer prostrations at the world's greatest seat of Occult learning. I marveled at my good fortune in having such a wonderful Guide as the Lama Mingyar Dondup; without him I should be an ordinary chela, living in a dark dormitory instead of being almost on top of the world.

Suddenly, so suddenly that I emitted a squeak of surprise, strong arms grasped mine and lifted me in the air. A deep voice said, "So! All you think of your Guide is that he gets you high in the Potala and feeds you those sickly sweet confections from India?" He laughed down my protestations; and I was too blind, or too confused to realize that he knew what I thought of him!

At last he said, "We are in rapport, we knew each other well in a past life. You have all the knowledge of that past life and merely need to be reminded. Now we have to work. Come to my room."

I straightened my robe and put back my bowl which had fallen out when

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I was lifted into the air, then I hurried to the room of my Guide. He motioned for me to sit, and when I was settled, he said, "And have you pondered on the matter of Life, on our discussion of last night?"

I hung my head in some dismay as I replied, "Sir, I had to sleep, then the Lord Abbot wanted to see me, then you wanted to see me, then I had to have food and then you wanted to see me again. I have had no time to think of anything today!"

There was a smile on his face as he said, "We are going to discuss later the effects of food but first let us resume about Life." He stopped and reached out for a book which was written in some outlandish foreign language. Now I know it was the English language. Turning over pages he at last found that which he was seeking. Passing the book to me, opened at a picture, he asked, "Do you know what that is?"

I looked at the picture, and it was so very ordinary that I looked at the strange words beneath. It meant nothing at all to me. Passing the book back I said reproachfully, "You know I cannot read it, Honourable Lama!"

"But you recognize the picture?" he persisted.

"Well, yes, it is just a Nature Spirit, no different from anything here."

I was becoming more and more puzzled. What was it all about?

The Lama opened the book again and said, "In a far-off country across the seas the general ability to see Nature Spirits has been lost. If one sees such a Spirit it is a matter for jest, the Seer is literally accused of 'seeing things.' Western people do not believe in things unless they can be torn to pieces or held in the hands, or put in a cage. A Nature Spirit is termed a Fairy in the West—and Fairy Tales are not believed." This amazed me immensely. I could see Spirits at all times and took them as absolutely natural. I shook my head to clear some of the fog out of it.

The Lama Mingyar Dondup spoke. "All Life, as I told you last night, consists of rapidly vibrating Matter generating an electrical charge, the electricity is the Life of Matter. As in music there are various octaves. Imagine that the ordinary Man in the Street vibrates on a certain octave, then a Nature Spirit and a Ghost will vibrate at a higher octave. Because the Average Man lives and thinks and believes on one octave only, people of other octaves are invisible to him!"

I fiddled with my robe, thinking it over; it did not make sense to me. I could see ghosts and nature spirits, therefore anyone should be able to see them also.

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The Lama, reading my thoughts, replied, "You see the aura of humans. Most other humans do not. You see nature spirits and ghosts. Most other humans do not. All very young children see such things, because the very young are more receptive. Then as the child grows older, the cares of living coarsen the perceptions. In the West, children who tell their parents that there has been a game with Spirit Playmates are punished for telling lies, or are laughed at for their 'vivid imagination.' The child resents such treatment and after a time convinces himself that it was all imagination! You, because of your special upbringing see ghosts and nature spirits, and you always will, just as you will always see the human aura."

"Then even the nature spirits who tend flowers are the same as us?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied, "the same as us except that they vibrate faster and their particles of matter are more diffused. That is why you can put your hand right through them just as you can put your hand right through a sunbeam."

"Have you ever touched—you know, held—a ghost?" I queried.

"Yes I have!" he replied. "It can be done if one raises one's own rate of vibrations. I will tell you about it."

My Guide touched his silver bell, a gift from a High Abbot of one of Tibet's better known Lamaseries. The monk-servant, knowing us well, brought, not tsampa, but tea from Indian plants, and those sweet cakes which were carried across the high mountains specially for His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, and which I, just a poor chela, enjoyed so much. "Reward for special efforts at study" as His Holiness had often said. The Lama Mingyar Dondup had toured the world, both in the physical and the astral. One of his very few weaknesses was an addiction to Indian tea. A weakness which I heartily endorsed! We settled down comfortably, and as soon as I had finished my cakes, my Guide and Friend spoke.

"Many years ago, when I was a young man, I scurried round a corner here at the Potala, just as you do, Lobsang! I was late for Service, and to my horror I saw a portly Abbot blocking my way. He was hurrying too! There was no time to avoid him; I was just rehearsing my apology when I crashed right through him. He was as alarmed as I. However, I was so bemused that I kept on running and so was not late, not too late, after all." I laughed, thinking of the dignified Lama Mingyar Dondup scurrying! He smiled at me and continued.

"Late that night I thought about it. I thought 'why shouldn't I touch a ghost?' The more I thought about it the more determined I was that I would touch one. I laid my plans carefully, and read all the old Scripts about such matters. I also

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consulted a very very learned man who lived in a cave high in the mountains. He told me much, he put me on the right path, and I am going to tell you the same, because it leads directly to the theme of touching a ghost."

He poured himself some more tea and sipped awhile before continuing. "Life, as I told you, consists of a mass of particles, little worlds circling around little suns. The motion generates a substance which, for want of a better term, we will call 'electricity.' If we eat sensibly we can increase our rate of vibration. A sensible diet, none of the crank cult ideas, increases one's health, increases one's basic rate of vibration. So we come nearer to the ghost's rate of vibration." He stopped and lit a fresh stick of incense. Satisfied that the end was glowing satisfactorily, he turned his attention again to me.

"The sole purpose of incense is to increase the rate of vibration of the area in which it is burned, and the rate of those within that area. By using the correct incense, for all are designed for a certain vibration, we can attain certain results. For a week I held myself to a rigid diet, one which increased my vibration or 'frequency.' For that week also I continually burned the appropriate incense in my room. At the end of that time I was almost 'out' of myself; I felt that I floated rather than walked, I felt the difficulty of keeping my astral form within my physical." He looked at me and smiled as he said, "You would not have appreciated such a restricted diet!"

"No" I thought, "I would rather touch a square meal than any good ghost!"

"At the end of the week," said the Lama my Guide, "I went down to the Inner Sanctuary and burned more incense while I implored a ghost to come and touch me. Suddenly I felt the warmth of a friendly hand on my shoulder. Turning to see who was disturbing my meditation, I almost jumped straight out of my robe when I saw that I was being touched by the spirit of one who had 'died' more than a year ago." The Lama Mingyar Dondup stopped abruptly, then laughed out loud as he thought of that long-past experience.

"Lobsang!" he exclaimed at last, "the old 'dead' lama laughed at me and asked me why I had gone to all that trouble, when all I had to do was to go into the astral! I confess that I felt mortified beyond measure to think that such an obvious solution had escaped me. Now, as you well know, we do go into the astral to talk to ghosts and nature people."

"Of course, you spoke by telepathy," I remarked, "and I do not know of any explanation for telepathy. I do it, but how do I do it?"

"You ask the most difficult questions, Lobsang!" laughed my Guide. "The simplest things are the most difficult to explain. Tell me, how would you explain the process of breathing? You do it, everyone does it, but how does one

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explain the process?"

I nodded glumly. I knew I was always asking questions, but that was the only way to get to know things. Most of the other chelas were not interested, as long as they had their food and not too much work they were satisfied. I wanted more, I wanted to know.

"The brain," said the Lama, "is like a radio set, like the device which that man Marconi is using to send messages across the oceans. The collection of particles and electrical charges which constitutes a human being, has the electrical, or radio, device of the brain to tell it what to do. When a person thinks of moving a limb, electric currents race out along the appropriate nerves to galvanize the muscles into the desired action. In the same way, when a person thinks, radio or electrical waves—actually they come from the higher part of the radio spectrum—are radiated from the brain. Certain instruments can detect the radiations and can even chart them into what the Western doctors term 'alpha, beta, delta, and gamma' lines." I nodded slowly, I had already heard of such things from the Medical Lamas.

"Now," my Guide continued, "sensitive persons can detect these radiations also, and can understand them. I read your thoughts, and when you try, you can read mine. The more two people are in sympathy, in harmony, with each other, the easier it is for them to read these brain radiations which are thoughts. So we get telepathy. Twins are often quite telepathic to each other. Identical twins, where the brain of one is a replica of the other, are so telepathic each to the other that it is often difficult indeed to determine which one originated a thought."

"Respected Sir," I said, "as you know, I can read most minds. Why is this? Are there many more with this particular ability?"

"You, Lobsang," replied my Guide, "are especially gifted and specially trained. Your powers are being increased by every method at our command for you have a difficult task in the Life ahead of you." He shook his head solemnly, "A difficult task indeed. In the Old Days Lobsang, Mankind could commune telepathically with the animal world. In the years to come, after Mankind has seen the folly of wars, the power will be regained; once again Man and Animal will walk in peace together, neither desiring to harm the other."

Below us a gong boomed and boomed again. There came the blare of trumpets, and the Lama Mingyar Dondup jumped to his feet, saying, "We must hurry, Lobsang the Temple Service is about to commence, and His Holiness Himself will be there." I hastily rose to my feet, rearranged my robe, and rushed after my Guide, now far down the corridor and almost out of sight.

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CHAPTER TWO

The great Temple seemed to be a living thing. From my vantage point, high in the roof, I could look down and see the whole vast extent of the place. Earlier in the day my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, and I had journeyed to this place on a special mission. Now the Lama was closeted with a high dignitary, and I—free to wander—had found this priestly observation post amid the mighty rafters which supported the roof. Prowling about on the walkway of the roof, I had discovered the door and daringly pushed it open. No loud shout of wrath greeting the action; I peeped inside. The place was empty, so I entered and found myself in a small stone room, like a cell built into the stone of the Temple wall. Behind me was the small wooden door, stone walls on either side, and before me a stone ledge perhaps three feet high.

Silently I moved forward and knelt so that only my head was above the stone ledge. I felt like a God in the Heavens peering down on the lowly mortals, peering down on the dim obscurity of the Temple floor so many many feet below. Outside the Temple the purple dusk was giving way to darkness. The last rays of the sinking Sun would be fading behind the snow covered peaks, sending iridescent showers of light through the perpetual spume of snow flying from the very highest ranges.

The darkness of the Temple was relieved, and in places intensified, by hundreds of flickering butter lamps. Lamps which shone as golden points of light, yet still diffused a radiance around. It looked as if the stars were at my feet instead of over my head. Weird shadows stole silently across mighty pillars; shadows now thin and elongated, now short and squat, but always grotesque and bizarre with the cross lighting making the usual seem unearthly, and the unusual strange beyond description.

I peered, staring down, feeling as if in a half-world, uncertain of what I was seeing and what I was imagining. Between me and the floor floated clouds

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of blue incense smoke rising in layer after layer, reminding me even more of a viewpoint of a God looking down through the clouds of the Earth. Gently rising clouds of incense swirled thickly from the Censers swung by young and devout chelas. Up and down they paced, silent of foot and immobile of face. As they turned and turned again, a million points of light reflected from the golden Censers and sent forth dazzling beams of light. From my vantage I could look down and see the red-glowing incense as, fanned by the breeze, it at times almost flared into flames and sent off showers of red, fast dying sparks. Given fresh life, the incense smoke rose in thicker columns of blue to form trailing paths above and behind the chelas. Rising higher, the smoke formed yet another cloud within the Temple.

Wreathing and twisting on the faint air currents from moving monks, it seemed like a thing alive, like a creature, dimly seen, breathing and turning in sleep. For a while I gazed, becoming almost hypnotized with the fantasy that I was inside a living creature, watching the lift and sway of its organs, listening to the sounds of the body, of Life itself. Through the gloom, through the clouds of incense smoke, I could see the serried ranks of lamas, trappas, and chelas.

Sitting cross legged upon the floor they stretched in their endless rows until they became invisible in the farthest recesses of the Temple. All in their Robes of Order they appeared as a living, rippling patchwork of familiar colour. Gold, saffron, red, brown, and a very faint sprinkling of grey, the colours seemed to come alive and flow into each other as their wearers moved. At the head of the Temple sat His Holiness, the Inmost One, the Thirteenth Incarnation of the Dalai Lama, the most revered Figure in the whole of the Buddhist world.

For a time I watched, listened to the chant of the deep-voiced lamas accented by the high treble of the small chelas. Watched the incense clouds vibrate in sympathy with the deeper vibrations. Lights flickered into darkness and were replaced, incense burned low and was replenished in a shower of red sparks. The service droned on and I knelt there and watched. Watched the dancing shadows grow and die upon the walls, watched the glittering pinpoints of light until I hardly knew where I was or what I was doing.

An aged lama, bent under the weight of years far beyond the normal span, moved slowly before his Brothers of the Order. Around him hovered attentive trappas, with sticks of incense and a light at hand. Bowing to the Inmost One, and turning slowly to bow to each of the Four Corners of the Earth, he at last faced the assembly of monks within the Temple. In a surprisingly strong voice for so aged a man, he chanted:

“Hear the Voices of our Souls. This is the World of Illusion. Life on Earth

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is but a dream that, in the time of the Life Eternal, is but the twinkling of an eye. Hear the Voices of our Souls, all you that are sore depressed. This Life of Shadow and Sorrow will end, and the Glory of the Life Eternal will shine forth on the righteous. The first stick of incense is lit that a troubled Soul may be guided.”

A trappa stood forth and bowed to the Inmost One before turning slowly and bowing in turn to the Four Corners of the Earth. Lighting a stick of incense, he turned again and pointed with it to the Four Corners. The deep-voiced chant rose again and died, to be followed by the high treble of the young chelas. A portly lama recited certain Passages, punctuating them by ringing his Silver Bell with a vigor occasioned only by the presence of the Inmost One. Subsid-ing into silence, he looked covertly around to see if his performance had obtained due approval. The Aged Lama stepped forward once more, and bowed to the Inmost One and to the Stations. Another trappa hovered at ready attention, overanxious in the Presence of the Head of the State and Religion. The Aged Lama chanted:

“Hear the Voices of our Souls. This is the World of Illusion. Life on Earth is the Testing, that we may be purified of our dross and soar ever upwards. Hear the Voices of our Souls, all you that are in doubt. Soon the memory of the Earth life will pass away, and there will be Peace, and release from Suffering. The second stick of incense is lit that a doubting Soul may be guided.”

The chanting of the monks below me increased and swelled again as the trappa lit the second stick and went through the ritual of bowing to the Inmost One and pointing the incense to each Corner in turn. The walls of the Temple appeared to breathe, to sway in unison with the chanting. Around the Aged Lama ghostly forms gathered, those who had recently passed from this life without the preparation, and who now wandered unguided, and alone.

The flickering shadows seemed to leap and writhe like souls in torment; my own consciousness, my perceptions, my feelings even, flickered between two worlds. In the one I peered with rapt attention at the progress of the Service beneath me.

In the other I saw the “between worlds” where the souls of the newly departed trembled in fear at the strangeness of the Unknown. Isolated souls, clad in dank, clinging darkness, they wailed in their terror and loneliness.

Apart from each other, apart from all others because of their lack of belief, they were as immobile as a yak stuck in a mountain bog. Into the sticky darkness of the “between worlds,” relieved only by the faint blue light from those ghostly forms, came the chanting, the Invitation, of the Aged Lama:

“Hear the Voices of our Souls. This is the World of Illusion. As Man died

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in the Greater Reality that he might be born on Earth, so must he die on Earth that he may be reborn again to the Greater Reality. There is no Death, but Birth, the pangs of Death are the pangs of Birth. The third stick of incense is lit that a Soul in Torment may be guided.”

Into my consciousness came a telepathic command; “Lobsang! Where are you? Come to me now!” Jerking myself back to this world by a great effort, I staggered to my numb feet and tottered out of the little door.

“I am coming, Respected Sir!” I thought to my Guide. Rubbing my eyes, watering in the cold night air after the warmth and incense smoke of the Temple, I stumbled and felt my way along high above the ground to where my Guide was waiting in a room right over the main entrance.

He smiled as he saw me. “My! Lobsang!” he exclaimed, “you look as if you have seen a ghost!”

“Sir!” I replied, “I have seen several.”

“Tonight, Lobsang, we shall remain here,” said the Lama. “Tomorrow we shall go and call upon the State Oracle. You should find the experience of interest; but now it is time, first for food, and then for sleep. . .” While we ate I was preoccupied; thinking of what I had seen in the Temple, wondering how this was “the World of Illusion.”

Quickly I finished my supper and went to the room allotted to me. Wrapping myself in my robe, I lay down and soon was fast asleep. Dreams, nightmares, and strange impressions plagued me throughout the night.

I dreamed that I was sitting up, wide awake, and great globes of something came at me like the dust in a storm. I was sitting up, and from the great distance small specks appeared, growing larger and larger until I could see that the globes, as they were now, were of all colours. Growing to the size of a man’s head, they rushed at me and streaked away beyond. In my dream—if it was a dream!—I could not turn my head to see where they had gone; there were just these endless globes pouring out of nowhere and rushing on past me to—nowhere? It amazed me immensely that none of the globes crashed into me. They looked solid, yet to me they had no substance. With such horrid suddenness that it shook me wide awake, a voice behind me said, “As a ghost sees the stout, solid walls of the Temple, so now do you!” I shivered in apprehension; was I dead? Had I died in the night? But why was I worrying about “death”? I knew that so-called death was merely rebirth. I lay down and eventually fell asleep once more.

The whole world was shaking, creaking, and tumbling in crazy manner.

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I sat up in great alarm, thinking that the Temple was falling about me. The night was dark, with only the ghostly radiance of the stars above to shed the merest suspicion of light. Gazing straight ahead of me, I felt my hair rise in fright. I was paralyzed; I could not move a finger and worse, the world was growing larger.

The smooth stone of the walls coarsened and became porous rock from the extinct volcanoes. The holes in the stone grew and grew and I saw that they were peopled with nightmare creatures which I had seen through the Lama Mingyar Dondup's good German microscope.

The world grew and grew, the frightening creatures grew to ponderous size, becoming so vast with the passage of time that I could see their pores! Larger and larger grew the world, then it dawned on me that I was becoming smaller and smaller. I became aware that a dust storm was blowing. From somewhere behind me, the grains of dust roared by, yet none of them touched me. Rapidly they grew larger and larger. Some of them were as large as a man's head, others were as large as the Himalayas. Yet not one touched me. Still they grew larger until I lost all sense of size, until I lost all sense of time. In my dream I appeared to be lying out among the stars, lying cold and motionless while galaxy after galaxy streaked past me and vanished into the distance. How long I remained thus I cannot say. It seemed as if I lay there throughout eternity. At long, long last a whole galaxy, a whole series of Universes swung down directly upon me. "This is the end!" I thought vaguely as that multitude of worlds crashed into me.

"Lobsang! Lobsang! Have you gone to the Heavenly Fields?" The Voice boomed and reechoed around the universe, rebounding from worlds . . . re-echoing from the walls of my stone chamber. Painfully I opened my eyes and tried to get them into focus. Above me was a cluster of bright stars which somehow seemed familiar. Stars which slowly vanished to be replaced by the benign face of the Lama Mingyar Dondup. Gently he was shaking me. Bright sunlight streamed into the room. A sunbeam illuminated some dust motes, and they flashed with all the colours of the rainbow.

"Lobsang! The morning is far advanced. I have let you sleep but now it is time for you to eat and then we will be upon our way."

Wearily I scrambled to my feet. I was "out of sorts" this morning; my head seemed to be too big for me, and my mind was still dwelling upon the 'dreams' of the night. Bundling my scant possessions into the front of my robe, I left the room in search of tsampa, our staple food. Down the notched ladder I went, hanging on grimly for fear of falling. Down to where the cook-monks were lounging about.

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"I have come for food," I said meekly.

"Food? At this time of the morning? Be off with you!" roared the head cook-monk. Reaching out, he was about to give me a blow when another monk whispered hoarsely, "He is with the Lama Mingyar Dondup!"

The head cook-monk jumped as if he had been stung by a hornet then bellowed to his assistant, "Well!? What are you waiting for? Give the young gentleman his breakfast!"

Normally I should have had enough barley in the leather pouch which all monks carry, but as we were visiting my supplies were exhausted. All monks, no matter whether chelas, trappas or lamas, carried the leather bag of barley and the bowl from which to eat it. Tsampa was mixed with buttered tea and thus provided the staple food of Tibet. If Tibetan lamaseries printed menus, there would be one word only to print; tsampa! Somewhat refreshed after my meal, I joined the Lama Mingyar Dondup and we set off on horseback for the Lamasery of the State Oracle. We did not talk while journeying, my horse had a peculiar motion which required my full attention if I were to remain in place. As we traveled along the Lingkor Road, pilgrims, seeing the high rank of my Guide's robes, called to him for blessing. Receiving it, they continued the Holy Circuit looking as if they were at least half way to salvation. Soon we walked our horses through the Willow Grove and came to the stony path leading to the Home of the Oracle. In the courtyard monk-servants took our horses as, thankfully, I at last slid to the ground.

The place was crowded. The highest lamas had traveled the length and breadth of our country to be present. The Oracle was going to get in communication with the Powers that ruled the world. I, by special arrangement, by special command of the Inmost One, was to be present. We were shown to where we would sleep, I next to the Lama Mingyar Dondup, and not in a dormitory with many other chelas. As we passed a small temple within the main building I heard "Hear the Voices of our Souls. This is the World of Illusion."

"Sir!" I said to my Guide when we were alone, "how is this the 'World of Illusion'?"

He looked at me with a smile. "Well," he replied, "What is real? You touch this wall and your finger is stopped by the stone. Therefore you reason that the wall exists as a solid that nothing can penetrate. Beyond the windows the mountain ranges of the Himalayas stand firm as the backbone of the Earth. Yet a ghost, or you in the astral can move as freely through the stone of the mountains as you can through the air."

"But how is that 'illusion'?" I asked. "I had a dream last night which re-

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ally was illusion; I feel pale even to think of it!"

My Guide, with infinite patience, listened while I told of that dream and when I had finished my tale he said, "I shall have to tell you about the World of illusion. Not for the moment, though, as we must first call upon the Oracle."

The State Oracle was a surprisingly young man, thin, and of very sickly appearance. I was presented to him and his staring eyes burned straight through me, making tingles of fright race up and down my spine. "Yes! You are the one, I recognize you well," he said. "You have the power within; you shall have the knowledge also. I will see you later."

The Lama Mingyar Dondup, my beloved friend, looked well pleased with me. "You pass every test, Lobsang, every time!" he said. "Now come, we will retire to the Sanctuary of the Gods and talk." He smiled down at me as we walked along. "Talk, Lobsang," he remarked, "about the World of Illusion."

The Sanctuary was deserted, as my Guide knew in advance. Flickering lamps burned before the Sacred Images, causing their shadows to jump and move as though in some exotic dance. Incense smoke spiraled upwards to form a low-lying cloud above us. Together we sat by the side of the Lectern from whence the Reader would read from the Sacred Books. We sat in the attitude of contemplation, legs crossed, and fingers entwined.

"This is the World of Illusion," said my Guide, "Wherefore we call to souls to hear us, for they alone are in the World of Reality. We say, as you well know, Hear the Voices of our Souls, we do not say Hear our Physical Voices. Listen to me, and do not interrupt, for this is the basis of our Inner Belief. As I shall explain later, people not sufficiently evolved must first have a belief which sustains them, makes them feel that a benevolent Father or Mother is watching over them. Only when one has evolved to the appropriate stage can one accept this which I shall now tell you." I gazed at my Guide, thinking that he was the whole world to me, wishing we could be always together.

"We are creatures of the Spirit," he said, "we are like electric charges endowed with intelligence. This world, this life, is Hell, it is the testing place wherein our Spirit is purified by the suffering of learning to control our gross flesh body. Just as a puppet is controlled by strings manipulated by the Puppet Master, so is our flesh body controlled by strings of electric force from our Overself, our Spirit. A good Puppet Master can create the illusion that the wooden puppets are alive, that they act of their own volition. In the same way we, until we learn better, consider that our flesh body is the only thing that matters. In the spirit-strangling atmosphere of the Earth we forget the Soul that truly controls us, we think that we do things of our own free will and are an-

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swerable only to our "conscience." So, Lob-sang, we have the first Illusion, the illusion that the puppet, the flesh body, is the one that matters." He stopped at the sight of my puzzled expression. "Well?" he asked, "and what troubles you?"

"Sir!" I said, "where are my strings of electric force? I cannot see anything connecting me to my Overself!"

He laughed as he replied, "Can you see air, Lobsang? Not while you are in the flesh body." Leaning forward he grasped my robe, nearly scaring the life out of me as I stared into his penetrating eyes. "Lobsang!" he said sternly, "have all your brains evaporated? Are you really bone from the neck up? Have you forgotten the Silver Cord, that collection of lines of electric force linking you—here—with your soul? Truly, Lobsang, you are in the World of Illusion!"

I felt my face grow red. Of course I knew about the Silver Cord, that cord of bluish light which connects the physical body to the spirit body. Many times, when astral travelling, I had watched the Cord shimmering and pulsing with light and life. It was like the umbilical cord which connects the mother and the newborn child, only the 'child' which was the physical body could not exist for a moment if the Silver Cord was severed.

I looked up, my Guide was ready to continue after my interruption. "When we are in the physical world we tend to think that only the physical world matters. That is one of the safety devices of the Overself; if we remembered the Spirit World with its happiness we would be able to remain here only by a strong effort of will. If we remembered past lives when, perhaps, we were more important than in this life, we should not have the necessary humility. We will have some tea brought in and then I will show you, or tell you, of the life of a Chinaman from his death, to his rebirth and to his death and arrival in the Next World." The Lama stretched forth his hand to ring the small silver bell in the Sanctuary, then stopped at my expression. "Well?" he asked, "what is your question?"

"Sir!" I answered, "why a Chinaman? Why not a Tibetan?"

"Because," he replied, "if I say 'a Tibetan' you will try to associate the name with someone you know, with incorrect results."

He rang the bell and a servant-monk brought us tea. My Guide looked at me thoughtfully. "Do you realize that in drinking this tea we are swallowing millions of worlds?" he asked. "Fluids have a more sparsely molecular content. If you could magnify the molecules of this tea you would find that they roll like the sands beside a turbulent lake. Even a gas, even the air itself is composed of molecules, of minute particles. However, that is a digression, we were going to discuss the death and life of a Chinaman." He finished his tea and

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waited while I finished mine.

“Seng was an old mandarin,” said my Guide. “His life had been a fortunate one and now, in the evening of that life he felt a great contentment. His family was large, his concubines and slaves many. Even the Emperor of China himself had shown him favours. As his aged eyes peered shortsightedly through the window of his room he could dimly discern the beautiful gardens with the strutting peacocks. Softly to his failing ears came the song of birds returning to the trees as the day grew old. Seng lay back, relaxed upon his cushions. Within himself he could feel the rustling fingers of Death loosing his bonds with life. Slowly the blood red sun sank behind the ancient pagoda. Slowly Old Seng sank back upon his cushions, a harsh rattling breath hissing through his teeth. The sunlight faded, and the little lamps in the room were lighted, but Old Seng had gone, gone with the last dying rays of the sun.” My Guide looked at me in order to be sure that I was following him,

“Old Seng lay slumped upon his cushions, with his body sounds creaking and wheezing into silence. No longer did blood rush through arteries and veins, no longer did body fluids gurgle within. The body of Old Seng was dead, finished with, of no more use. But a clairvoyant, if one had been present, would have seen a light blue haze form around the body of Old Seng. Form, then lift over the body, floating horizontally above, attached by the thinning Silver Card. Gradually the Silver Cord thinned, and parted. The Soul which had been Old Seng floated off, drifted like a cloud of incense smoke, vanished effortlessly through the walls.” The Lama refilled his cup, saw that I also had tea, then continued.

“The Soul drifted on through realms, through dimensions which the materialist mind cannot comprehend. At last it reached a wondrous parkland, dotted with immense buildings at one of which he stopped; here the Soul that had been Old Seng entered and made his way across a gleaming floor. A soul, Lobsang, in its own surroundings, is as solid as you are upon this world. The soul in the world of the soul, can be confined by walls, and walk upon a floor. The soul there has different abilities and talents from those we know upon the Earth. This Soul wandered on and at last entered a small cubicle. Sitting down, he gazed at the wall before him. Suddenly the wall appeared to vanish, and in its place he saw scenes, the scenes of his life. He saw that which we term The Akashic Record, which is the Record of all that has ever happened and which can be seen readily by those who are trained. It is also seen by everyone who passes from the Earth life to the life beyond, for Man sees the Record of his own successes and failures. Man sees his past and judges himself. There is no sterner judge than Man himself. We do not sit trembling before a God; we sit and see all that we did and all that we meant to do.” I sat silent, I found all this of quite

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absorbing interest. I could listen to this for hours-better than dull lessonwork!

“The Soul that had been Old Seng the Chinese Mandarin sat and saw again the life that he, upon Earth, had thought so successful,” continued my Guide. “He saw, and sorrowed for his many faults, and then he rose and left the cubicle, going speedily to a larger room where men and women of the Soul World awaited him. Silently, smiling with compassion and understanding, they awaited his approach, his request to be guided. Sitting in their company he told them of his faults, of the things he had attempted to do, meant to do, and failed.”

“But I thought you said he was not judged, he judged himself!” I said quickly.

“That is so, Lobsang,” replied my Guide. “Having seen his past and his mistakes, he now approached these Advisors in order to receive their suggestions—but do not interrupt, listen to me and save your questions for after.”

“As I was saying,” continued the Lama, “the soul sat with the Advisors and told them of his failures, told them of the qualities which he had to ‘grow’ in to his Soul before he could evolve further. First would come the return to view his body, then would come a period of rest—years or hundreds of years— and then he would be helped to find conditions such as were essential for his further progress. The Soul that had been Old Seng went back to Earth to gaze finally upon his dead body, now ready for burial. Then, no longer the Soul of Old Seng, but a Soul ready for rest, he returned to the Land Beyond. For a time unspecified he rested and recuperated, studying the lessons of past lives, preparing for the life to come. Here, in this life beyond death, articles and substances were as solid to his touch as they had been on Earth. He rested until the time and conditions were prearranged.” “I like this!” I exclaimed, “I find it of great interest.” My Guide smiled at me before continuing.

“At some predetermined time, the Soul in Waiting was called and was led forth into the World of Mankind by one whose task was such service. They stopped, invisible to the eyes of those in the flesh, watching the parents-to-be, looking at the house, assessing the probabilities that this house would afford the desired facilities for learning the lessons which had to be learned this time. Satisfied, they withdrew. Months later the Mother-to-Be felt a sudden quickening inside her as the Soul entered and the Baby came to life. In time the Baby was born to the World of Man. The Soul that had once activated the body of Old Seng now struggled anew with the reluctant nerves and brain of the child Lee Wong living in humble circumstances in a fishing village of China. Once again the high vibrations of a Soul were converted to the lower octave vibrations of a flesh body.”

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I sat and thought. Then I thought some more. At last I said, "Honorable Lama, as this is so, why do people fear death, which is but a release from the troubles of Earth?"

"That is a sensible question, Lobsang," replied my Guide. "Did we but remember the joys of the Other World many of us would not be able to tolerate hardships here, wherefore we have implanted within us a fear of death." Giving me a quizzical sideways glance, he remarked, "Some of us do not like school, do not like the discipline so necessary at school. Yet when one grows up and becomes adult the benefits of school become apparent. It would not do to run away from school and expect to advance in learning; nor is it advisable to end one's life before one's allotted time."

I wondered about this, because just a few days before an old monk, illiterate and sick, had thrown himself from a high hermitage. A sour old man he had been, with a disposition that made him refuse all offers of help. Yes, old Jigme was better out of the way, I thought. Better for himself. Better for others.

"Sir!" I said, "then the monk Jigme was at fault when he ended his own life?"

"Yes, Lobsang, he was very much at fault," replied my Guide. "A man or woman has a certain allotted span upon the Earth. If one ends his or her life before that time, then he or she has to return almost immediately. Thus we have the spectacle of a baby born to live perhaps a few months only. That will be the soul of a suicide returning to take over the body and so live out the time which should have been lived before. Suicide is never justified; it is a grave offence against oneself, against one's Overself."

"But Sir," I said, "how about the high born Japanese who commits ceremonial suicide in order to atone for family disgrace? Surely he is a brave man that he does that."

"Not so, Lobsang," my Guide was most emphatic. "Not so. Bravery consists not of dying but in living in face of hardship, in face of suffering. To die is easy, to live—that is the brave act! Not even the theatrical demonstration of pride in 'Ceremonial Suicide' can blind one to its wrongness. We are here to learn and we can only learn through living our allotted span. Suicide is never justified!" I thought again of old Jigme. He was very old when he killed himself, so when he came again, I thought, it would be for a short stay only.

"Honourable Lama," I asked, "what is the purpose of fear? Why do we have to suffer so much through fear? Already I have discovered that the things I fear most never happen, yet I fear them still!"

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The Lama laughed and said, "That happens to us all. We fear the Unknown. Yet fear is necessary. Fear spurs us on when otherwise we should be slothful. Fear gives us added strength with which to avoid accidents. Fear is a booster which gives us added power, added incentive, and makes us overcome our own inclination to laziness. You would not study your school work unless you feared the teacher or feared appearing stupid in front of others."

Monks were coming into the Sanctuary; chelas darted around lighting more butter lamps, more incense. We rose to our feet and walked out into the cool of the evening where a slight breeze played with the leaves of the willows. The great trumpets sounded from the Potala so far away, and dimly the echoes rolled around the walls of the State Oracle Lamasery.

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CHAPTER THREE

The Lamasery of the State Oracle was small, compact, and very secluded. Few small chelas played with carefree abandon. No groups of trappas lounged indolently in the sun-drenched courtyard, whiling away the noonday hour in idle chatter. Old men—old Lamas too!—were in the majority here. Aged men, white of hair and bent under the weight of years, they went slowly about their business. This was the Home of the Seers. To the aged lamas in general, and to the Oracle himself, was entrusted the task of Prophecy, of Divination. No uninvited visitor entered here, no stray traveler called in search of rest or food. This was a place feared by many and forbidden to all except those specially invited. My Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup was the exception; at any time he could enter and find that he was indeed a welcome visitor.

A gracious grove of trees gave the Lamasery privacy from prying eyes. Strong stone walls gave the buildings protection from the over-curious, if there should be any who would risk the wrath of the powerful Oracle Lama for idle curiosity. Carefully kept rooms were set aside for His Holiness the Inmost One who so frequently visited this Temple of Knowledge. The air was quiet, the general impression was of quietude, of men placidly going about their important business.

Nor was there opportunity for brawls, for noisy intruders. The Place was patrolled by the mighty Men of Kham, the huge men, many of them over seven feet tall, and none of them weighing less than two hundred and fifty pounds, who were employed throughout Tibet as monk-police charged with the task of keeping order in communities of sometimes thousands of monks. The monk-police strode about the grounds constantly alert, constantly on guard. Carrying mighty staves they were indeed a frightening sight to those with guilty consciences. A monk's robe does not necessarily cover a religious man; there are wrongdoers and lazy men in all communities, so the Men of Kham were

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busy.

The lamaistic buildings too were in keeping with their intended purpose. No high buildings here, no long notched poles to scale; this was for aged men, men who had lost the elasticity of youth, men whose bones were frail. The corridors were easy of access, and those of greatest age lived upon the ground floor. The State Oracle himself also lived upon the ground floor, at the side of the Temple of Divination. Around him lodged the oldest men, the most learned. And the senior monk-police of the Men of Kham.

"We will go to see the Oracle, Lobsang," said my Guide. "He has expressed great interest in you and is prepared to give you much of his time."

The invitation—or command—filled me with the greatest gloom; any visit to an astrologer or 'seer' in the past had been productive of bad news, more suffering, more confirmation of hardships to come. Usually, too, I had to wear my best robe and sit like a stuffed duck while listening to some prosy old man bleating out a string of platitudes which I would rather not hear. I looked up suspiciously; the Lama was struggling to conceal a smile as he gazed down at me. Obviously, I thought dourly, he has been reading my mind!

He broke into a laugh as he said, "Go as you are, the Oracle is not at all swayed by the state of one's robe. He knows more about you than you know yourself!"

My gloom deepened, what was I going to hear next, I wondered.

We walked down the corridor and went out into the inner courtyard. I glanced at the looming mountain ranges, feeling like one going to execution. A scowling police-monk approached, looking to me almost like a mountain on the move. Recognizing my Guide he broke into welcoming smiles and bowed deeply. "Prostrations at thy Lotus Feet, Holy Lama," he said. "Honour me by permitting me to lead you to His Reverence the State Oracle." He fell into step beside us and I felt sure that the ground trembled to his ponderous tread.

Two lamas stood beside the door, lamas, not ordinary monk-guards; at our approach they stood aside that we might enter. "The Holy One awaits you," said one smiling upon my Guide. "He is looking forward to your visit, Lord Mingyar," said the other.

We walked in and found ourselves to be in a somewhat dimly lighted room. For some seconds I could distinguish very little indeed; my eyes had been dazzled by the bright sunlight in the courtyard.

Gradually, as my vision returned to normal, I perceived a bare room with but two tapestries upon the walls and a small incense burner which stood

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smoking in a corner. In the centre of the room, upon a plain cushion, sat a quite young man. He looked thin and frail, and I was amazed indeed when I realized that this was the State Oracle of Tibet. His eyes protruded somewhat, and stared at me and through me. I had the impression that he was seeing my soul and not my earthly body.

My Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, and I prostrated ourselves in traditional and prescribed greeting, then we rose to our feet and stood waiting. At last, when the silence was becoming decidedly uncomfortable, the Oracle spoke.

“Welcome, Lord Mingyar, welcome Lobsang!” He said. His voice was somewhat high in pitch and was not at all strong; it gave the impression of coming from a great distance. For a few moments my Guide and the Oracle discussed matters of common interest, then the Lama Mingyar Dondup bowed, turned, and left the room. The Oracle sat looking at me and at last said, “Bring a cushion and sit by me, Lobsang.” I reached for one of the padded squares resting against a far wall and placed it so that I could sit before him. For a time he gazed at me in a somewhat moody silence, but at long last, when I was becoming uncomfortable beneath his scrutiny, he spoke. “So you are Tuesday Lobsang Rampa!” he said. “We knew each other well in another phase of existence. Now, by order of the Inmost One, I have to tell you of hardships to come, difficulties to overcome.”

“Oh, Sir!” I exclaimed, “I must have done terrible things in past lives to have to suffer thus in this. My Kharma, my predestined Fate, seems to be harder than anyone else’s.”

“Not so,” he replied, “it is a very common mistake for people to think that because they have hardships in this life they are necessarily suffering for the sins of past lives. If you heat metal in a furnace, do you do so because the metal has erred and must be punished, or do you do it in order to improve the qualities of the material?” He looked hard at me and said, “However, your Guide the Lama Mingyar Dondup will discuss that with you. I have to tell you only of the future.”

The Oracle touched a silver bell and an attendant entered silently. Padding across to us he placed a very low table between the State Oracle and me, and upon the table he placed an ornate silver bowl lined, apparently, with a form of porcelain. Within the bowl glowed charcoal embers which flared bright red as the monk-attendant swung it in the air before placing it in front of the Oracle. With a muttered word, the import of which was lost upon me, he placed a richly carved wooden box to the right of the bowl, and departed as silently as he had come. I sat still, ill at ease, wondering why all this had to happen to

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me. Everyone was telling me what a hard life I was going to have; they seemed to delight in it. Hardship was hardship, even though apparently I was not having to pay for the sins of some past life. Slowly the oracle reached forward and opened the box. With a small gold spoon he ladled out a fine powder which he sprinkled on to the glowing embers.

The room filled with a fine blue haze; I felt my senses reel and my sight grow dim. From a measureless distance away I seemed to hear the tolling of a great bell. Closer came the sound, and its intensity grew and grew until I felt my head would split. My sight cleared and I watched intently as a column of smoke rose endlessly from the bowl.

Within the smoke I saw movement, movement which came closer and engulfed me so that I was part of it. From somewhere beyond my comprehension the voice of the State Oracle reached me, droning on and on. But I had no need of his voice, I was seeing the future, seeing it as vividly as he. Within a point of Time I stood apart and watched the events of my life reel before me as if pictured upon an ever-moving film. My early childhood, events in my life, the fierceness of my father—all were portrayed before me.

Once again I sat before the great Lamasery of Chakpori. Once again I felt the hard rocks of the Iron Mountain as the wind whipped me from the Lamasery roof to fling me with bone-breaking force down the mountain side. The smoke swirled and the pictures (what we term “the Akashic Record”) moved on. I saw again my initiation, secret ceremonies wreathed in smoke as I was not then initiated. On the pictures I saw myself setting out on the long, lonely trail to Chungking in China.

A strange machine twisted and tossed in the air, soaring and falling above the steep cliffs of Chungking. And I? I was at the controls! Later I saw fleets of such machines, with the Rising Sun of Japan flaunted from their wings.

From the machines fell black blobs which rushed to the earth to erupt into flame and smoke.

Wrecked bodies hurtled heavenwards, and for a time the skies rained blood and human fragments. I felt sick at heart, and dazed, as the pictures moved and showed me myself being tortured by the Japanese. I saw my life, saw the hardships, felt the bitterness. But the greatest sorrow of all was the treachery and evil of some people of the Western world, who, I saw, were bent on destroying work for good for the sole reason that they were jealous. The pictures moved on and on, and I saw the probable course of my life before I lived it.

As I well knew, probabilities can be most accurately forecast. Only the

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minor details are sometimes different. One's astrological configurations set the limit of what one can be and can endure just as the governor of an engine can set its minimum and maximum speeds. "A hard life for me, all right!" I thought. Then I jumped so hard that I almost left the cushion; a hand was laid upon my shoulder.

As I turned I saw the face of the State Oracle, now sitting behind me. His look was of utter compassion, of sorrow for the difficult way ahead. "You are very psychic, Lobsang," he said, "I normally have to tell these pictures to on-lookers. The Inmost One, as one would expect, is quite correct."

"All I want," I replied, "is to stay here in peace. Why should I want to go to the Western world where they so ardently preach religion, and try to cut one's throat behind one's back?"

"There is a Task my friend," said the Oracle, "which must be accomplished. You can do it in spite of all oppositions. Hence the special and difficult training which you are undergoing." It made me feel most glum, all this talk about hardships and Tasks. All I wanted was peace and quiet and some harmless amusement now and then.

"Now," said the Oracle, "it is time for you to return to your Guide, for he has much to tell you and he is expecting you." I rose to my feet and bowed before turning and leaving the room. Outside the huge monk-policeman was waiting to lead me to the Lama Mingyar Dondup. Together we walked, side by side, and I thought of a picture book I had seen wherein an elephant and an ant walked a jungle path side by side.

"Well, Lobsang!" said the Lama as I entered his room, "I hope you are not too depressed at all that you have seen?" He smiled at me and motioned for me to sit. "Food for the body first, Lobsang, and then food for the Soul," he exclaimed laughingly as he rang his silver bell for the monk-attendant to bring our tea. Evidently I had arrived just in time! Lamasery rules stated that one must not look about while one was eating, one's eyes should not stray, and full attention should be given to the Voice of the Reader.

Here in the Lama Mingyar Dondup's room there was no Reader perched high above us, reading aloud from the Sacred Books in order to keep our thoughts from such common things as food. Nor were there any stern Proctors ready to jump at us for the slightest infraction of the Rules. I gazed out of the window at the Himalayas stretching endlessly before me, thinking that soon the time would come when I should gaze upon them no more. I had received glimpses into the future—my future—and I dreaded the things which I had not seen clearly but which had been partly veiled in smoke.

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“Lobsang!” said my Guide, “you have seen much, but much more has remained hidden. If you feel that you cannot face the planned Future, then we will accept the fact—though sadly—and you may remain in Tibet.”

“Sir!” I replied, “you once told me that the man who sets out upon one of Life’s Paths, falters, and turns back, is no man. I will go ahead in spite of knowing the difficulties before me.”

He smiled, and nodded his approval. “As I expected,” he said, “you will succeed in the end.”

“Sir!” I asked, “why do not people come to this world with a knowledge of what they have been in past lives and what they are supposed to do in this life? Why must there be what you term ‘Hidden Knowledge’? Why cannot we all know everything?”

The Lama Mingyar Dondup raised his eyebrows and laughed. “You certainly want to know a lot!” he said. “Your memory is failing, too, quite recently I told you that we do not normally remember our past lives as to do so would be to increase our load upon this world. As we say, ‘The Wheel of Life revolves, bringing riches to one and poverty to another. The beggar of today is the prince of tomorrow.’ If we do not know of our past lives we all start afresh without trying to trade on what we were in our last incarnation.”

“But,” I asked, “what about the Hidden Knowledge? If all people had that knowledge everyone would be better, would advance more quickly.”

My Guide smiled down at me. “It is not so simple as that!” he replied. For a moment he sat in silence, then he spoke again. “There are powers within us, within the control of our Overself, immeasurably greater than anything that Man has been able to make in the material, the physical world. Western Man in particular would abuse such Powers as we can command, for all that Western Man cares about is money. Western Man has but two questions: can you prove it? and, what do I get out of it?” He laughed quite boyishly and said, “I always feel most amused when I think of the vast array of mechanisms and apparatus which Man uses to send a ‘wireless’ message across the oceans. ‘Wireless’ is the last term they should use, for the apparatus consists of miles and miles of wire. But here, in Tibet, our trained lamas send telepathic messages with no apparatus at all. We go into the astral and travel through space and time, visiting other parts of the world, and other worlds. We can levitate—lift immense loads by the application of powers not generally known. Not all men are pure, Lobsang, nor does a monk’s robe always cover a holy man. There can be an evil man in a lamasery just as there can be a saint in prison.”

I looked at him in some puzzlement. “But if all men had this knowledge,

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surely they would all be good?" I asked.

The Lama looked at me sorrowfully as he replied. "We may be safeguarded. Many men, particularly those of the West, think only of money and of power over others. As has been foretold by the Oracle and others, this our land will later be invaded and physically conquered by a strange cult, a cult which has no thought for the common man, but exists solely in order to bolster up the power of dictators, dictators who will enslave half the world. There have been high lamas who have been tortured to death by the Russians because the lamas would not divulge forbidden knowledge. The average man, Lobsang, who suddenly had access to forbidden knowledge, would react like this: first he would be fearful of the power now within his grasp. Then it would occur to him that he had the means of making himself rich beyond his wildest dreams. He would experiment, and money would come to him. With increasing money and power he would desire yet more money and power. A millionaire is never satisfied with one million, but wants many millions more! It is said that in the unevolved, absolute power corrupts. The Hidden Knowledge gives absolute power."

A great light dawned upon me; I knew how Tibet could be saved! Jumping up excitedly, I exclaimed, "Then Tibet is saved! The Hidden Knowledge will save us from invasion!"

My Guide looked upon me with compassion. "No, Lobsang," he replied sadly, "we do not use the Powers for things like that. Tibet will be persecuted, almost annihilated, but in the years to come she will rise again and become greater, purer. The country will be purified of dross in the furnace of war just as, later, the whole world will be." He gave me a sideways glance. "There has to be wars, you know, Lobsang!" he said quietly. "If there were no wars the population of the world would become too great. If there were not wars there would be plagues. Wars and sickness regulate the population of the world and provide opportunities for people on the Earth—and on other worlds—to do good to others. There will always be wars until the population of the world can be controlled in some other way."

The gongs were summoning us to the evening service. My Guide the Lama Mingyar Dondup rose to his feet. "Come along, Lobsang," he said, "we are guests here and must show respect for our hosts by attending the service."

We walked out of the room and went into the courtyard. The gongs were calling insistently—being sounded longer than would have been the case at Chakpori. We made our surprisingly slow way to the Temple. I wondered at our slowness, then as I looked around I saw very aged men, and the infirm, hobbling across the courtyard in our footsteps.

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My Guide whispered to me, "It would be a courtesy, Lobsang, if you went across and sat with those chelas." Nodding, I made my way round the inner walls of the Temple until I came to where the chelas of the State Oracle Lamasery were sitting. They eyed me with curiosity as I sat down to one side of them. Almost imperceptibly, when the Proctors were not looking, they edged forward until they surrounded me.

"Where do you come from?" asked one boy, one who seemed to be the leader.

"Chakpori," I replied in a whisper.

"You the fellow sent by the Inmost One?" whispered another.

"Yes," I whispered back, "I have been to see the Oracle, he told me... ."

"SILENCE!" roared a fierce voice just behind me, "Not another sound out of you boys!" I saw the big man move away.

"Ga!" said a boy, "don't take any notice of him, his bark is worse than his bite."

Just then the State Oracle and an Abbot appeared through a small door at the side, and the service commenced.

Soon we were streaming out into the open again. With the others I went to the kitchen to have my leather barley bag refilled and to get tea. There was no opportunity to talk; monks of all degree were standing about, having a last minute discussion before retiring for the night. I made my way to the room allotted to me, rolled myself in my robe and lay down to sleep. Sleep did not come quickly, though. I gazed out at the purple darkness, pinpointed by the golden-flamed butter lamps. Far away the eternal Himalayas stretched rock-fingers skyward as if in supplication to the Gods of the World. Vivid white shafts of moonlight flashed through mountain crevices, to disappear and flash again as the moon climbed higher. There was no breeze tonight, the prayer flags hung listlessly from their poles. The merest trace of cloud floated indolently above the City of Lhasa. I turned over, and fell into a dreamless sleep.

In the very early hours of the morning I awakened with a start of fright; I had overslept and would be late for the early service. Jumping to my feet, I hastily shrugged into my robe and bolted for the door. Racing down the deserted corridor I dashed out into the courtyard—straight into the arms of one of the Men of Kham. "Where are you going?" he whispered fiercely as he held me in an iron grip.

"To early morning service," I replied, "I must have overslept."

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He laughed and released me. "Oh!" he said "you are a visitor. There is no early service here. Go back and sleep again."

"No early service?" I cried, "why everyone has early service!"

The monk-policeman must have been in a good mood, for he answered me civilly, "We have old men here, and some who are infirm, for that reason we dispense with the early service. Go, and rest awhile in peace." He patted me on the head, gently for him, like a thunderclap for me, and pushed me back into the corridor. Turning, he resumed his pacing of the courtyard, his ponderous footsteps going "bonk! bonk!" with the heavy stave going "thunk! thunk!" as the butt thudded into the ground at every other step. I raced back along the corridor and in minutes was sound asleep again.

Later in the day I was presented to the Abbot and two of the senior lamas. They questioned me intently, asking me questions about my home life, what I remembered of past lives, my relationship with my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup. Finally the three rose tottering to their feet and filed toward the door. "Come" said the last one, crooking a finger in my direction. Dumbfounded, walking as one in a daze, I followed meekly behind. They wended a slow way out of the door and shuffled lethargically along the corridor.

I followed, almost tripping over my feet in an effort to go slowly enough. We crawled on, past open rooms where trappas and chelas alike looked up in curiosity at our slow passing. I felt my cheeks burn with embarrassment at being on the "tail" of this procession; at its head, the Abbot shuffling along with the aid of two sticks. Next came two old lamas who were so decrepit and withered that they could scarce keep up with the Abbot. And I, bringing up the rear, could hardly go slowly enough.

At long last, or it seemed "long last" to me, we reached a small doorway set in a far wall. We stopped while the Abbot fumbled with a key and mumbled beneath his breath. One of the lamas stepped forward to assist him, and eventually a door was pushed open with a squeal of protesting hinges. The Abbot entered, followed by first one lama and then the other. No one said anything to me, so I went in as well. An old lama pushed the door shut behind me. Before me there was a fairly long table laden with old and dust-covered objects. Old robes, ancient Prayer Wheels, old bowls, and assorted strings of Prayer Beads. Scattered on the table were a few Charm Boxes and various other objects which I could not at first glance identify.

"Hmmmnn. Mmmmnn. Come here my boy!" commanded the Abbot.

I moved reluctantly toward him and he grasped my left arm with his bony

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hand. I felt as if in the clutch of a skeleton!

“Hmmm. Mmmmn. Boy! Hmmm. Which, if any, of these objects and articles were in your possession during a past life?” He led me the length of the table, then turned me about and said, “Hmmm. Mmmmn. If you believe that any article was yours. Hmmm, pick it or them out and Hmmm, Mmmmn, bring it or them to me.” He sat down heavily and appeared to take no more interest in my activities. The two lamas sat with him, and no word was uttered.

“Well!” I thought to myself, “if the three old men want to play it this way, all right, I will play it their way!”

Psychometry is, of course, the simplest thing of all to do. I walked slowly along with my left hand extended palm down over the various articles. At certain objects I experienced a form of itch in the centre of the palm, and a slight shiver, or tremor, thrilled along my arm. I picked out a Prayer Wheel, an old battered bowl, and a string of beads.

Then I repeated my journey by the side of the long table. Only one more article caused my palm to itch and my arm to tingle; an old tattered robe in the last stages of decay. The saffron robe of a high official, the colour almost bleached out by age, the material rotten and powdery to the touch. Gingerly I picked it up, half afraid that it would disintegrate between my cautious hands. Carefully I carried it to the old Abbot, deposited it at his feet, and returned for the Prayer Wheel, the battered bowl, and the string of beads. Without a word the Abbot and the two lamas examined the articles and compared certain signs, or secret markings, with those in an old black book which the Abbot produced. For a time they sat facing each other, heads a-nod on withered necks, ancient brains almost creaking with the effort to think.

“Harrumph! Arrrf!” mumbled the Abbot, wheezing like an overworked yak. “Mmmmmnn. It is indeed he. Hmmm. A remarkable performance. Mmmmn. Go to your Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, my boy and Hmmm, tell him that we should be honoured by his presence. You my boy, need not return. Harrumph! Arrrf!”

I turned and raced from the room, glad to be free from these living mummies whose desiccated remoteness was so far removed from the warm humanity of the Lama Mingyar Dondup. Scurrying round a corner I came to a full stop inches from my Guide. He laughed at me and said, “Oh! Don’t look so startled, I received the message also.” Giving me a friendly pat on the back he hastened on toward the room containing the Abbot and the two old lamas. I wandered out into the courtyard and idly kicked a stone or two.

“You the fellow whose Incarnation is being Recognized?” asked a voice

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behind me. I turned to see a chela regarding me intently.

"I don't know what they are doing," I replied. "All I know is that I have been dragged round the corridors so that I could pick out some of my old things. Anyone could do that!"

The boy laughed good-naturedly, "You Chakpori men know your stuff," he said, "or you would not be in that Lamasery. I heard it said that you were someone big in a past life. You must have been for the Oracle Himself to devote half a day to you." He shrugged his shoulders in mock horror and remarked, "You'd better look out. Before you know what is happening they will have Recognized you and made you an Abbot. Then you won't be able to play with the other men at Chakpori any longer."

From a door at the far end of the courtyard appeared the form of my Guide. Rapidly he strode toward us. The chela with whom I had been talking bowed low in humble salutation. The Lama smiled upon him and spoke kindly, as always. "We must be on our way, Lobsang!" said the Lama Mingyar Dondup to me, "soon night will be upon us, and we do not want to ride through the darkness."

Together we walked to the stables where a monk-groom was waiting with our horses. Reluctantly I mounted and followed my Guide on to the path through the willow trees. We jogged along in silence; I could never converse intelligently on horseback as the whole of my energies was devoted to staying on. To my astonishment we did not turn off at Chakpori, but wended our way on to the Po-tala. Slowly the horses climbed the Road of Steps. Beneath us the Valley was already fading into the shadows of the night. Gladly I dismounted and hurried into the now-familiar Potala in search of food.

My Guide was waiting for me when I went to my room after supper. "Come in with me, Lobsang," he called. I went in and at his bidding seated myself. "Well!" he said, "I expect you are wondering what it is all about."

"Oh! I expect to be Recognized as an Incarnation!" I replied airily. "One of the men and I were discussing it at the State Oracle Lamasery when you called me away!"

"Well that is very nice for you," said the Lama Mingyar Dondup. "Now we have to take some time and discuss things. You need not attend service tonight. Sit more comfortably and listen, and do not keep interrupting."

"Most people come to this world in order to learn things," commenced my Guide. "Others come in order that they may assist those in need, or to complete some special, highly important task." He looked sharply at me to make

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sure that I was following, then continued, "Many religions preach about a Hell, the place of punishment, or expiation for one's sins. Hell is here, on this world. Our real life is on the other World. Here we come to learn, to pay for mistakes made in previous lives—as I said—to attempt the accomplishment of some highly important task. You are here to do a task in connection with the human aura. Your 'tools' will be an exceptionally sensitive psychic perception, a greatly intensified ability to see the human aura, and all the knowledge that we can give you concerning all the occult arts. The Inmost One has decreed that every possible means be used to increase your abilities and talents. Direct teaching, actual experiences, hypnotism, we are going to use them all in order that we may get the most knowledge into you in the shortest time."

"Hell it is, all right!" I exclaimed gloomily.

The Lama laughed at my expression. "But this Hell is merely the stepping stone to a far better life," he replied. "Here we are able to get rid of some of the baser faults. Here, in a few years of Earth life, we shed faults which may have plagued us in the Other World for countless spans of time. The whole life of this world is but the twinkling of an eye to that of the Other World. Most people in the West," he went on, "think that when one 'dies' one sits on a cloud and plays a harp. Others think that when one leaves this world for the next one they exist in a mystical state of nothingness and like it." He laughed and continued, "If we could only get them to realize that the life after death is more real than anything on Earth! Everything on this world consists of vibrations; the whole world's vibrations—and everything within the world—may be likened to an octave on a musical scale. When we pass to the Other Side of Death the 'octave' is raised further up the scale."

My Guide stopped, seized my hand and rapped my knuckles on the floor. "That, Lobsang," he said, "is stone, the vibrations which we term stone." Again he took my hand and rubbed my fingers on my robe. "That," he exclaimed, "is the vibration which indicates wool. If we move everything up the scale of vibrations we still maintain the relative degrees of hardness and softness. So, in the Life after Death, the real Life, we can possess things just as we do on this world. Do you follow that clearly?" he asked.

Obviously it was clear, I had known things like that for a very long time. The Lama broke into my thoughts. "Yes, I am aware that all this is common knowledge here, but if we vocalize these 'unspoken thoughts' we shall make it clearer in your mind. Later," he said, "you will journey to the lands of the Western world. There you will meet many difficulties through Western religions." He smiled somewhat wryly and remarked, "The Christians call us heathens. In their Bible it is written that 'Christ wandered in the wilderness.' In our records

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it is revealed that Christ wandered throughout India, studying Indian religions, and then He came to Lhasa and studied at the Jo Kang under our foremost priests of that time. Christ formulated a good religion, but the Christianity practiced today is not the religion that Christ produced.” My Guide looked at me somewhat severely and said, “I know you are a little bored by this, thinking I am talking for the sake of words, but I have traveled throughout the Western world and I have a duty to warn you of what you will experience. I can do that best by telling you of their religions, for I know you have an eidetic memory.” I had the grace to blush; I had been thinking “too many words!”

Outside in the corridors monks were shush-shushing along toward the Temple to the evening service. On the roof above trumpeters looked out across the Valley and sounded the last notes of the dying day. Here, in front of me my Guide the Lama Mingyar Dondup continued his talk. “There are two basic religions in the West but innumerable subdivisions. The Jewish religion is old and tolerant. You will have no trouble, no difficulties caused by Jews. For centuries they have been persecuted, and they have great sympathy and understanding for others. The Christians are not so tolerant, except on Sundays. I am not going to say anything about individual beliefs, you will read of them, but I am going to say how religions started.

“In the early days of life upon Earth,” said the Lama, “people were first in little groups, very small tribes. There were no laws, no code of behavior. Strength was the only law; a stronger and fiercer tribe made war upon those weaker. In course of time a stronger and wiser man arose. He realized that his tribe would be the strongest if it were organized. He founded a religion and a code of behavior. ‘Be fruitful and multiply,’ he commanded, knowing that the more babies were born the stronger would his tribe grow. ‘Honour thy father and thy mother’ he ordered, knowing that if he gave parents authority over their children he would have authority over the parents. Knowing too that if he could persuade children to feel indebted to their parents, discipline would be easier to enforce. ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery’ thundered the Prophet of that time. His real command was that the tribe should not be ‘adulterated’ with the blood of a member of another tribe, for in such cases there are divided loyalties. In course of time the priests found that there were some who did not always obey religious teachings. After much thought, much discussion, those priests worked out a scheme of reward and punishment. ‘Heaven’, ‘Paradise,’ ‘Valhalla,—term it what you will—for those who obeyed the priests. Hell fire and damnation with everlasting tortures for those who disobeyed.”

“Then you are opposed to the organized religions of the West, Sir?” I asked.

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“No, most certainly not,” replied my Guide, “there are many who feel lost unless they can feel or imagine an all-seeing Father peering down at them, with a Recording Angel ready to note any good deeds as well as bad! We are God to the microscopic creatures who inhabit our bodies, and the even smaller creatures that inhabit his molecules! As for prayer, Lobsang, do you often listen to the prayers of the creatures existing on your molecules?”

“But you said that prayer was effective,” I responded with some astonishment.

“Yes, Lobsang, prayer is very effective if we pray to our own Overself, to the real part of us in another world, the part which controls our ‘puppet strings’. Prayer is very effective if we obey the simple, natural rules which make it so.”

He smiled at me as he said, “Man is a mere speck in a troubled world. Man is only comfortable when feeling safe in some form of ‘Mother’s embrace.’ For those in the West, untrained in the art of dying, the last thought, the last cry, is ‘Mother!’ A man who is unsure of himself while trying to give an appearance of confidence will suck a cigar or cigarette just as a baby will suck a dummy. Psychologists agree that the smoking habit is merely a reversion to the traits of early childhood where a baby drew nourishment and confidence from his mother. Religion is a comforter. Knowledge of the truth of life—and death—is of even greater comfort. We are like water when on Earth, like steam when we pass over in ‘death’ and we condense again to water when we are reborn to this world once more.”

“Sir!” I exclaimed, “do you think that children should not honour their parents?”

My Guide looked at me in some surprise; “Good gracious, Lobsang, of course children should pay respect to their parents so long as the parents merit it. Overdominant parents should not be permitted to ruin their children, though, and an adult ‘child’ certainly has first responsibility to his or her wife or husband. Parents should not be permitted to tyrannize and dictate to their adult offspring. To allow parents to act thus is to harm the parents as well as oneself; it makes a debt which the parents must pay in some other life.”

I thought of my parents. My stern and harsh father, a father who had never been a ‘father’ to me. My mother whose main thought was of the social life. Then I thought of the Lama Mingyar Dondup who was more than a mother and father to me, the only person who had shown me kindness and love at all times.

A monk-messenger hastened in and bowed deeply. “Honourable Lord Mingyar,” he said respectfully, “I am commanded to convey to you the respects and salutations of the Inmost One and to ask you to be good enough to go to

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Him. May I lead you to Him, Sir?"

My Guide rose to his feet and accompanied the messenger. I walked out and climbed to the roof of the Potala. Slightly higher, the Medical Lamasery of Chakpori loomed out of the night. By my side a Prayer Flag flapped weakly against its mast. Standing in a nearby window I saw an old monk busily twirling his Prayer Wheel, its 'clack-clack' a loud sound in the silence of the night. The stars stretched overhead in endless procession, and I wondered, did we look like that to some other creature, somewhere?

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CHAPTER FOUR

The season was that of Logsar, the Tibetan New Year. We chelas—and trappas also—had been busy for some time now, making butter images. Last year we had not bothered and had therefore occasioned some ill feeling; other lamaseries had held to the belief (correctly!) that we of Chakpori had neither time nor interest for such childish pursuits.

This year, then, by order of the Inmost One Himself, we had to make butter images and enter the contest. Our effort was a modest one compared to that of some lamaseries. On a wooden framework, some twenty feet high by thirty feet long, we were moulding in coloured butter various scenes from the Sacred Books. Our figures were fully three-dimensional, and we hoped that when seen by the light of the flickering butter lamps there would be an illusion of movement.

The Inmost One Himself, and all the senior lamas, viewed the exhibits every year and much praise was accorded the builders of the winning effort. After the Season of Logsar the butter was melted down and used in the butter lamps throughout the year. As I worked—I had some skill in modeling—I thought of all that I had learned during the past few months. Certain things about religion still puzzled me and I resolved to ask my Guide the Lama Mingyar Dondup about them at the first opportunity, but now butter sculpture was the thing! I stooped and scraped up a fresh load of flesh coloured butter and carefully climbed up the scaffolding so that I could build up the ear to Buddha-like proportions. Off to my right two young chelas were having a butter ball fight, scooping up hand loads of butter, moulding the stuff roughly round, then throwing that messy missile at the “enemy.” They were having a great time; unfortunately a monk-proctor appeared round a stone pillar to see what all the noise was about. Without a word he seized both boys, one in his right hand and the other in his left and threw them both into a great vat of warm butter!

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I turned and got on with my work. Butter mixed with lamp-black formed very suitable eyebrows. Already there was illusion of life in the figure. "This is the World of Illusion, after all," I thought. Down I climbed, and walked across the floor so that I could obtain a better impression of the work. The Master of the Arts smiled upon me; I was perhaps his favorite pupil as I liked modeling and painting and really worked to learn from him. "We are doing well, Lobsang," he said pleasantly, "the Gods look alive."

He walked away in order that he could direct alterations to another part of the scene and I thought, "The Gods look alive! Are there Gods? Why are we taught about them if there are none? I must ask my Guide."

Thoughtfully I scraped the butter from my hands. Over in the corner the two chelas who had been thrown into the warm butter were trying to get themselves clean by rubbing their bodies with fine brown sand, looking very foolish indeed as they rubbed away. I chuckled and turned to go. A heavyset chela walked beside me and remarked, "Even the Gods must have laughed at that!"

"Even the Gods, Even the Gods, Even the Gods" the refrain echoed through my mind in time with my footsteps. The Gods; were there Gods? I walked on down to the Temple and settled myself, waiting for the familiar service to commence.

"Hear the Voices of our Souls, all you who wander. This is the World of Illusion. Life is but a dream. All that are born must die." The priest's voice droned on, reciting the well-known words, words which now struck at my curiosity; "The third stick of incense is lit to summon a wandering ghost that he may be guided."

"Not helped by the Gods," I thought, "but guided by his fellow men, why not by the Gods? Why did we pray to our Overself and not to a God?"

The rest of the service had no attraction, no meaning for me. I was jolted out of my thoughts by an elbow digging violently into my ribs.

"Lobsang! Lobsang! What is the matter with you, are you dead? Get up, the service is over!" I stumbled to my feet and followed the others out of the Temple.

"Sir!" I said to my Guide the Lama Mingyar Dondup some hours later, "Sir! Is there a God? Or Gods?"

He looked down at me and said, "Let us go and sit on the roof, Lobsang, we can hardly talk here in this crowded place." He turned and led the way along the corridor, out through the Lamas' quarters, up the notched pole and so on to the roof. For a moment we stood looking at the well-loved scene, the

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towering mountain ranges, the bright water of the Kyi Chu, and the reed-girt Kaling Chu. Beneath us the Norbu Linga, or Jewel Park, showed as a mass of living green. My Guide waved his hand. "Do you think all this is chance, Lobsang? Of course there is a God!" We moved to the highest part of the roof and sat down.

"You are confused in your thinking, Lobsang," stated my Guide. "There is a God; there are Gods. While upon this Earth we are in no position to appreciate the Form and Nature of God. We live in what may be termed a three-dimensional world: God lives in a world so far removed that the human brain while on earth, cannot hold the necessary concept of God and thus men tend to rationalize. 'God' is assumed to be something human, superhuman if you prefer the term, but Man, in his conceit, believes that he is made in the Image of God! Man also believes that there is no life on other worlds. If Man is made in the Image of God and the peoples of other worlds are in a different image, what is to become of our concept that Man only is made in God's Image?" The Lama looked keenly at me to make sure that I was following his remarks. Most certainly I was; all this appeared self-evident.

"Every world, every country of every world, has its God, or Guardian Angel. We call the God in charge of the world the Manu. He is a highly evolved Spirit, a human who through incarnation after incarnation has purged the dross, leaving only the pure behind. There is a band of Great Beings who at times of need come to this Earth that they may set an example whereby ordinary mortals may be enabled to lift from the mire of worldly desires."

I nodded my head; I knew about this, knew that Buddha, Moses, Christ and many others were of that Order. I knew also of Maitreya, who, it is stated in the Buddhist Scriptures, will come to the world 5,656 million years after the passing of Buddha, or Gautama as He should more accurately be named. All this, and more, was part of our standard religious teaching as was the knowledge that any good person had an equal chance no matter what name his own religious belief carried. We never believed that only one religious sect "went to Heaven," and all others were tumbled down to Hell for the amusement of sundry sanguinary fiends. But my Guide was ready to continue.

"We have the Manu of the world, the Great Evolved Being who controls the destiny of the world. There are minor Manus who control the destiny of a country. In endless years, the World Manu will move on, and the next best, now well trained, will evolve, will take over the Earth."

"Ah!" I exclaimed in some triumph, "then not all Manus are good! The Manu of Russia is allowing Russians to act against our good. The Manu of China permits the Chinese to raid our borders and kill our people." The Lama smiled

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across at me.

“You forget, Lobsang,” he replied, “this world is Hell, we come here to learn lessons. We come here to suffer that our spirit may evolve. Hardship teaches, pain teaches, kindness and consideration do not. There are wars in order that men may show courage on the battlefields and, like iron ore in the furnace, be tempered and strengthened by the fire of battle. The flesh body does not matter, Lobsang, that is only a temporary puppet. The Soul, the Spirit, the Overself (call it what you will) is all that need be considered. On Earth, in our blindness, we think that the body alone matters. Fear that the body may suffer clouds our outlook and warps our judgement. We have to act for the good of our own Overselves, while still assisting others. Those who follow blindly the dictates of overbearing parents add a load to the parents as well as to themselves. Those who blindly follow the dictates of some stereotyped religious belief also cramp their evolution.”

“Honourable Lama!” I expostulated, “may I add two comments?”

“Yes, you may,” replied my Guide.

“You said that we learn more quickly if conditions are harsh. I would prefer a little more kindness. I could learn that way.”

He looked thoughtfully at me. “Could you?” he asked. “Would you learn the Sacred Books even if you did not fear the teachers? Would you do your share in the kitchens if you did not fear punishment if you lazed? Would you?”

I hung my head, it was right, I worked in the kitchens when ordered to. I studied the Sacred Books because I feared the result of failure. “And your next question?” asked the Lama.

“Well, Sir, how does a stereotype religion injure one’s evolution?”

“I will give you two examples,” replied my Guide. “The Chinese believed that it did not matter what they did in this life as they could pay for faults and sins when they came again. Thus they adopted a policy of mental slothfulness. Their religion became as an opiate and drugged them into spiritual laziness; they lived only for the next life, and so their arts and crafts fell into disuse. China thus became a third-rate power in which bandit warlords started a reign of terror and pillage.”

I had noticed that the Chinese in Lhasa seemed to be unnecessarily brutal and quite fatalistic. Death to them meant nothing more than passing to another room! I did not fear death in any way, but I wanted to get my task finished in one lifetime instead of slacking, and having to come to this World time after time. The process of being born, being a helpless baby, having to go to school,

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all that to me was trouble. I hoped that this life would be my last on Earth. The Chinese had had wonderful inventions, wonderful works of art, a wonderful culture. Now, through too slavishly adhering to a religious belief, the Chinese people had become decadent, a ready prey to Communism. At one time age and learning had been deeply respected in China, as should be the case, now—no more were the sages given the honour due to them; all that mattered now was violence, personal gain and selfishness.

“Lobsang!” The voice of my Guide broke in to my thoughts. “We have seen a religion which taught inaction, which taught that one should not in any way influence another in case one added to one’s own Karma—the debt which passes on from life to life.” He looked out across the City of Lhasa, seeing our peaceful Valley, then turned to me again. “Religions of the West tend to be very militant. People there are not content to believe what they want to believe, but they are willing to kill others to make them believe the same.”

“I don’t see how killing a person would be good religious practice,” I remarked.

“No, Lobsang,” replied the Lama, “but in the time of the Spanish Inquisition one branch of Christians tortured any other branch in order that they might be ‘converted and saved.’ People were stretched on the rack and burned at the stake that they might thus be persuaded to change their belief! Even now these people send out missionaries who try by almost any means to obtain converts. It seems that they are so unsure of their belief that they must have others express approval and agreement of their religion, on the lines, presumably, that there is safety in numbers!”

“Sir!” I said, “do you think people should follow a religion?”

“Why, certainly, if they so desire,” replied the Lama Mingyar Dondup. “If people have not yet reached the stage where they can accept the Overself, and the Manu of the World, then it may be a comfort for them to adhere to some formal system of religion. It is a mental and spiritual discipline, it makes some people feel that they belong within a family group, with a benevolent Father watching over them, and a compassionate Mother ever ready to intercede on their behalf with the Father. Yes, for those in a certain stage of evolution, such religion is good. But the sooner such people realize that they should pray to their Overself the sooner will they evolve. We are sometimes asked why we have Sacred Images in our Temples, or why we have Temples at all. To that we can reply that such Images are reminders that we, too, can evolve and in time become high Spiritual Beings. As for our Temples, they are places where people of like mind may congregate for the purpose of giving mutual strength in the task of reaching one’s Overself. By prayer, even when that prayer be not prop-

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erly directed, one is able to reach a higher rate of vibration. Meditation and contemplation within a Temple, a Synagogue, or Church is beneficial.”

I mused upon that which I had just heard. Below us the Kaling Chu tinkled and ran faster as it squeezed to crowd itself beneath the Bridge of the Lingkor Road. Off to the south I perceived a party of men waiting for the Ferryman of the Kyi Chu. Traders had come earlier in the day, bringing papers and magazines for my Guide. Papers from India, and from strange countries of the world. The Lama Mingyar Dondup had traveled far and often, and kept in close touch with affairs outside Tibet. Papers, magazines. I had a thought at the back of my mind. Something that had bearing on this discussion. Papers? Suddenly I jumped as if stung. Not papers, but a magazine! Something I had seen, now what was it? I knew! It was all clear to me; I had flicked over some pages, not understanding a single word of the foreign languages, but seeking pictures. One such page had stopped beneath my questing thumb. The picture of a winged being hovering in the clouds, hovering above a field of bloody battle. My Guide, to whom I had shown the picture, had read and translated for me the caption.

“Honourable Lama!” I exclaimed excitedly, “earlier today you told me of that Figure-you called it the Angel of Mons-which many men claimed to see above a battlefield. Was that a God?”

“No, Lobsang,” replied my Guide, “many many men, in the hour of their desperation, longed to see the figure of a Saint, or as they term it, an Angel. Their urgent need and strong emotions inherent in a battlefield gave strength to their thoughts, their desires and their prayers. Thus, in the manner of which I have shown you, they formed a thought form to their own specifications. As the first ghostly outline of a figure appeared, the prayers and thoughts of the men who caused it were intensified, and so the figure gained in strength and solidity and persisted for an appreciable time. We do the same thing here when we ‘raise thought-forms’ in the Inner Temple. But come, Lobsang, the day is far advanced and the Ceremonies of Logsar are not yet concluded.”

We walked down the corridor, down into the scene of bustle, the busy turmoil which was the everyday life within a lamasery during a Season of Celebration. The Master of the Arts came in search of me, wanting a small, light boy to climb the scaffold and make some alterations to the head of a figure at the top. Trailing in the Master’s wake, I followed him at a brisk pace down the slippery path to the Butter Room. I donned an old robe, one liberally coated with coloured butter, and tying a light line around my waist that I might haul up material, I climbed the scaffold. It was as the Master had surmised, part of the head had broken away from the wooden slats. Calling down what I wanted, I

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dangled my rope and pulled up a pail of butter. For some hours I worked, twisting slivers of thin wood round the struts of the backing, moulding once again the butter to hold the head in place. At long last, the Master of the Arts, watching critically from the ground, indicated that he was satisfied. Slowly, stiffly, I disentangled myself from the scaffolding and slowly descended to the ground. Thankfully I changed my robe and hurried off.

The next day I and many other chelas were down on the Plain of Lhasa, at the foot of the Potala, by the Village of Sho. In theory we were watching the processions, the games, and the races. In actuality we were showing off in front of the humble pilgrims who thronged the mountain paths that they might be in Lhasa at the time of Logsar. From all over the Buddhist world they came, to this, the Mecca of Buddhism. Old men crippled with age, young women carrying small babies, all came in the belief that in completing the Holy Circuit of the City and the Po-tala, they were atoning for past sins and ensuring a good rebirth to the next life on Earth. Fortune tellers thronged the Lingkor Road, ancient beggars whined for alms, and traders with their goods suspended from their shoulders pushed their way through the throngs in search of customers. Soon I tired of the frenzied scene, tired of the gaping multitude and their endless, inane questions. I slipped away from my companions and slowly wandered up the mountain path to my lamaistic home.

Upon the roof, in my favorite spot, all was quiet. The sun provided a gentle warmth. From below me, now out of sight, there arose a confused murmur from the crowds, a murmur which in its indistinctness, soothed me and made me drowse in the noonday heat. A shadowy figure materialized almost at the extreme limit of my vision. Sleepily I shook my head and blinked my eyes. When I again opened them the figure was still there, clearer now and glowing more dense. The hairs at the back of my neck rose in sudden fright. "You are not a ghost!" I exclaimed. "Who are you?"

The Figure smiled slightly and replied, "No, my son, I am not a ghost. Once I too studied here at the Chakpori, and lazed as you are lazing now upon this roof. Then I desired above all to speed my liberation from Earthly desires. I had myself immured within the walls of that hermitage," he gestured upwards, and I turned to follow the direction of his outstretched arm. "Now," he continued, telepathically, "on this the eleventh Logsar since that date I have attained that which I sought; freedom to roam at will, while leaving my body safe within the hermitage cell. My first journey is to here, that I may once again gaze upon the crowd, that I may once again visit this well-remembered spot. Freedom, boy, I have attained freedom."

Before my gaze he vanished like a cloud of incense dispersed by the

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night wind.

The hermitages! We chelas had heard so much about them, what were they like inside? We often wondered. Why did men incarcerate themselves within those rock chambers, perched precariously upon the mountain's edge? We wondered about that too! I determined that I would ask my beloved Guide. Then I remembered that an old Chinese monk lived a few yards from where I was. Old Wu Hsi had had an interesting life; for some years he had been a monk attached to the Palace of the Emperors in Peking. Tiring of such life, he had wandered into Tibet in search of enlightenment. Eventually he had reached the Chakpori, and had been accepted. Tiring of that after a few years, he had gone to a hermitage and for seven years had lived the solitary life. Now, though, he was back at Chakpori waiting to die. I turned and hastened to the corridor below. Making my way to a small cell, I called to the old man.

"Come in! Come in!" he called in a high, quavering voice. I entered his cell, and for the first time met Wu Hsi the Chinese monk. He was sitting cross-legged and in spite of his age his back was as straight as a young bamboo. He had high cheekbones, and very very yellow, parchment-like skin. His eyes were jet black and slanted. A few straggly hairs grew from his chin, and from his upper lip depended a dozen or so hairs of his long moustache. His hands were yellow-brown, and mottled with great age, while his veins stood out like the twigs of a tree. As I walked toward him he peered blindly in my direction, sensing rather than seeing, "Hmmn, hmmn," he said, "a boy, a young boy from the way you walk. What do you want, boy?"

"Sir!" I replied, "you lived for long in a hermitage. Will you, Holy Sir, have the goodness to tell me of it?"

He mumbled and chewed at the ends of his moustache and then said, "Sit boy, it is long since I talked of the past, although I think of it constantly now."

"When I was a boy," he said, "I traveled far and went to India. There I saw the hermits encloistered within their caves, and some of them appeared to have attained to enlightenment." He shook his head; "The ordinary people were very lazy, spending their days beneath the trees. Ah! It was a sad sight!"

"Holy Sir!" I interrupted, "I should much prefer to hear of the hermitages of Tibet."

"Eh? What's that?" he asked feebly. "Oh yes, the hermitages of Tibet. I returned from India and went to my native Peking. Life there bored me, for I was not learning. I took again my staff and my bowl and made my way, over many months, to the borders of Tibet."

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I sighed to myself in exasperation. The old man continued, "In course of time, after having stayed at lamasery after lamasery, always in search of enlightenment, I reached Chakpori. The Abbot permitted me to stay here as I was qualified as a physician in China. My specialty was acupuncture. For a few years I was content, then I conceived a great desire to enter a hermitage."

By now I was almost dancing with impatience. If the old man took much longer I should be too late—I could not miss evening service! Even as I thought of it, I could hear the first booming of the gongs. Reluctantly I rose to my feet and said, "Respected sir, I have to go now." The old man chuckled.

"No, boy," he replied, "you may stay, for are you not here receiving instruction from an Elder Brother? Stay, you are excused from evening service."

I seated myself again, knowing that he was correct; although he was still a trappa, and not a lama, yet still he was considered as an Elder because of his age, his travels, and his experience.

"Tea boy, tea!" he exclaimed, "we will have tea, for the flesh is frail and the weight of the years press heavily upon me. Tea, for the young and for the old."

In response to his summons, a Monk Attendant to the Aged brought us tea and barley. We mixed our tsampa, and settled down, he to talk and I to listen.

"The Lord Abbot gave me permission to leave Chakpori and enter a hermitage. With a monk-attendant I journeyed from this place and ascended in to the mountains. After five days of travel we reached a spot which may be discerned from the roof above us."

I nodded, I knew the place, a solitary building set high in the Himalayas. The old man continued, "This place was empty, the former occupant had recently died. The Attendant and I cleaned out the place then I stood and looked out across the Valley of Lhasa for the last time. I looked down at the Po-tala and at Chakpori, then turned and went into the inner chamber. The Attendant walled up the door, cementing it firmly, and I was alone."

"But Sir! What is it like inside?" I asked.

Old Wu Hsi rubbed his head. "It is a stone building," he replied slowly. "A building with very thick walls. There is no door, once one is inside the inner chamber because the doorway is walled up. In the wall there is a trap, entirely lightproof, through which the hermit received food. A dark tunnel connects the inner chamber with the room wherein lives the Attendant. I was walled in. The darkness was so thick that I could almost feel it. Not a glimmer of light

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entered, nor could any sound be heard. I sat upon the floor and began my meditation. First I suffered from hallucinations, imagining that I saw streaks and bands of light. Then I felt the darkness strangling me as if I were covered in soft, dry mud. Time ceased to exist. Soon I heard, in my imagination, bells, and gongs, and the sound of men chanting. Later I beat against the constraining walls of my cell, trying in my frenzy to force a way out. I knew not the difference between day or night, for here all was as black and as silent as the grave. After some time I grew calm, my panic subsided."

I sat and visualized the scene, old Wu Hsi— young Wu Hsi then!—in the almost living darkness within the all-pervading silence. "Every two days," said the old man, "the attendant would come and place a little tsampa outside the trap. Come so silently that I could never hear him. The first time, feeling blindly for my food in the darkness I knocked it off and could not reach it. I called and screamed, but no sound escaped from my cell; I just had to wait for another two days."

"Sir!" I asked, "what happens if a hermit is ill, or dies?"

"My boy," said old Wu Hsi, "if a hermit is ill, he dies. The attendant places food every two days for fourteen days. After fourteen days, if the food is still untouched, men come and break down the wall and take out the body of the hermit."

Old Wu Hsi had been a hermit for seven years. "What happens in a case like yours, when you have stayed for the time decided upon?"

"I stayed for two years and then for seven. When it was almost time for me to come out the smallest of small holes was made in the ceiling so that a very minute shaft of light entered. Every few days the hole was enlarged, permitting more light to enter. At last I could withstand the full light of day. If the hermit is suddenly brought out into the light he is immediately struck blind as his eyes have been so long dilated in the darkness that they can no longer contract. When I came out I was white, bleached white, and my hair was as white as the mountain snows. I had massage and did exercise, for my muscles were almost useless with disuse. Gradually I recovered my strength until at last I was able with my attendant to descend the mountain to reside again at Chakpori."

I pondered his words, thinking of the endless years of darkness, of utter silence, thrown upon his own resources, and I wondered, "What did you learn from it, Sir?" I asked at last, "was it worth it?"

"Yes, boy, yes, it was worth it!" said the old monk. "I learned the nature of life, I learned the purpose of the brain. I became free of the body and could

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send my spirit soaring afar just as you do now in the astral.”

“But how do you know that you did not imagine it? How do you know you were sane? Why could you not travel in the astral as I do?”

Wu Hsi laughed until the tears rolled down his furrowed cheeks. “Questions-questions-questions, boy, just as I used to ask them!” he replied. “First I was overcome by panic. I cursed the day I became a monk, cursed the day I entered the cell. Gradually I was able to follow the breathing patterns and to meditate. At the start I had hallucinations, vain imaginings. Then one day I slipped free of my body and the darkness was dark no more to me. I saw my body sitting in the attitude of meditation. I saw my sightless, staring, wide-open eyes. I saw the pallor of my skin and the thinness of my body. Rising, I passed through the roof of the cell and saw below me the Valley of Lhasa. I saw certain alterations, saw people with whom I was acquainted and, passing into the Temple, I was able to converse with a telepathic lama who confirmed my release for me. I wandered far and wide and beyond the borders of this country. Every two days I returned and entered my body, reanimating it that I might eat and nourish it”

“But why could you not do astral travelling without all that preparation?” I asked again.

“Some of us are very ordinary mortals. Few of us have the special ability given to you by virtue of the task you have to undertake. You, too, have traveled far by the astral way. Others, such as I, have to endure solitude and hardship before one’s spirit can break free from the flesh. You, boy, are one of the fortunate ones, one of the very fortunate ones!” The old man sighed, and said, “Go! I must rest, I have talked long. Come and see me again, you will be a welcome visitor in spite of your questions.”

He turned away, and with a muttered word of thanks I rose to my feet, bowed, and slipped quietly from the room. I was so busy thinking that I walked straight into the opposite wall and almost knocked my spirit out of my body. Rubbing my aching head, I walked sedately along the corridor until I reached my own cell.

The midnight service was almost over. Monks were fidgeting slightly, ready to hurry off for a few more hours of sleep before returning. The old Reader up on the podium carefully inserted a marker between the pages of the Book and turned in readiness to step down. Sharp eyed proctors, ever alert for disturbances, or for inattentive small boys, relaxed their gaze. The service was almost over. Small chelas swung the censers for the last pass, and there was the barely suppressed hum of a large gathering preparing to move. Suddenly

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there was an ear-splitting screech, and a wild figure bounded over the heads of the sitting monks and tried to seize a young trappa, holding two sticks of incense.

We jerked upright with shock. Before us the wild figure whirled and spun, foam flying from writhing lips, hideous screams pouring from tortured throat. For a moment of time the world seemed to stand still; police-monks frozen into immobility with surprise, officiating priests standing with arms upraised. Then violently, the proctors swung into action. Converging on the mad figure, they quickly subdued him, winding his robe about his head to silence the evil oaths which streamed in a torrent from his mouth. Efficiently, speedily, he was lifted and removed from the Temple. The service ended. We rose to our feet and hastened out, anxious to get beyond the Temple bounds so that we could discuss that which we had just seen.

"That's Kenji Tekeuchi," said a young trappa near me.

"He is a Japanese monk who has been visiting everywhere."

"Been around the world, so they say," added another.

"Searching for Truth, and hoping to get it handed to him instead of working for it," remarked a third.

I wondered off, somewhat troubled in mind. Why should 'Searching for Truth' make a man mad? The room was cold, and I shivered slightly as I wrapped my robe around me and lay down to sleep. It seemed that no time at all had elapsed before the gongs were booming again for the next service. As I looked through the window I saw the first rays of the sun come over the mountains, rays of light like giant fingers probing the sky, reaching for the stars. I sighed, and hurried down the corridor, anxious not to be the last one to enter the Temple and thus merit the wrath of the proctors.

"You are looking thoughtful, Lobsang," said my Guide the Lama Mingyar Dondup when I saw him later in the day, after the noon service. He motioned for me to sit. "You saw the Japanese monk, Kenji Tekeuchi, when he entered the Temple. I want to tell you about him, for later you will meet him." I settled myself more comfortably, this was not going to be a quick session; I was 'caught' for the rest of the day! The Lama smiled as he saw my expression. "Perhaps we should have Indian tea . . . and Indian sweetcakes . . . to sugar the pill, Lobsang, eh?"

I brightened up a bit, and he chuckled and said, "The attendant is bringing it now, I expected you!"

Yes, I thought, as the monk-servant entered, "where else would I have

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such a Teacher?" The cakes from India were my special favorites, and even the Lama's eyes sometimes widened with astonishment at the number I could 'put away'!

"Kenji Tekeuchi," said my Guide, "is—was—a very versatile man. A well traveled one. Throughout his life (he is now over seventy) he has wandered the world in search of what he calls 'Truth'. Truth is within him yet he knows it not. Instead he has wandered, and wandered again. Always he has been studying religious beliefs, always he has been reading the books of many lands in pursuit of this search, this obsession. Now, at long last, he has been sent to us. He has read so much of a conflicting nature that his aura is contaminated. He has read so much and understood so little that most of the time he is insane. He is a human sponge, mopping up all knowledge and digesting very little."

"Then, Sir!" I exclaimed "you are opposed to book-study?"

"Not at all, Lobsang," replied the Lama, "I am opposed, as are all thinking men, to those who obtain the brochures, the pamphlets, and the books written about strange cults, about so-called occultism. These people poison their soul, they make further progress impossible for them until they have shed all the false knowledge and become as a little child."

"Honourable Lama," I asked, "how does one become insane; how does wrong reading sometimes lead to confusion?"

"That is quite a long story, " replied the Lama Mingyar Dondup. "First we have to deal with some fundamentals. Possess yourself in patience and listen! Upon Earth we are as puppets, puppets made of vibrating molecules surrounded by an electric charge. Our Overself vibrates at a very much higher rate, and has a very much higher electric charge. There is a definite relationship between our rate of vibration and that of our Overself. One can liken the process of communication between each one of us on this Earth and our Overself elsewhere to a new process on this world, the process whereby radio waves are sent across continents and seas, thus enabling a person in one country to communicate with a person in a far distant land. Our brains are similar to radio receivers in that they receive the 'high frequency' messages, orders and instructions, from the Overself and turn them into low frequency impulses which control our actions. The brain is the electromechanical-chemical device which makes us useful on Earth. Chemical reactions cause our brain to function in a faulty manner by perhaps blocking part of a message, for rarely, on Earth, do we receive the exact message 'broadcast' by the Overself. The Mind is capable of limited action without reference to the Overself. The Mind is able to accept certain responsibilities, form certain opinions, and attempts to bridge the gap between the 'ideal' conditions of the Overself and the difficult ones of

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Earth.”

“But do Western people accept the theory of electricity in the brain?” I asked.

“Yes,” replied my Guide, “in certain hospitals the brain waves of patients are charted, and it has been found that certain mental disorders have a characteristic brain-wave pattern. Thus, from the brain waves it can be stated that a person does or does not suffer from some mental disease or illness. Often an illness of the body will send certain chemicals to the brain, contaminate its waveform, and thus give symptoms of insanity.”

“Is the Japanese very mad?” I asked.

“Come! We will see him now, he has one of his lucid spells.” The Lama Mingyar Dondup rose to his feet and hurried from the room. I jumped to my feet and sped after him. He led the way on down the corridor, down to another level, and to a distant wing where lodged those undergoing medical treatment. In a little alcove, overlooking the Khati Linga, the Japanese monk sat looking moodily outwards. At the approach of the Lama Mingyar Dondup he rose to his feet, clasped his hands and bowed low.

“Be seated,” said my Guide. “I have brought a young man to you that he may listen to your words. He is under special instruction by order of the Inmost One.”

The Lama bowed, turned and left the alcove. For some moments the Japanese stared at me, then motioned for me to sit. I sat—at a discreet distance as I did not know when he would become violent!

“Do not cram your head with all the occult stuff you can read, boy!” said the Japanese monk. “It is indigestible matter which will impede your spiritual progress. I studied all the Religions. I studied all the metaphysical cults which I could find. It poisoned me, clouded my outlook led me to believe that I was a Specially Chosen One. Now my brain is impaired and at times I lose control of myself, escape from the direction of my Overself.”

“But Sir!” I exclaimed, “how may one learn if one may not read? What possible harm can come of the printed word?”

“Boy!” said the Japanese monk, “certainly one may read, but choose with care what you read and make sure that you quite understand that which you are reading. There is no danger in the printed word, but there is danger in the thoughts which those words may cause. One should not eat everything, mixing the compatible with the incompatible; nor should one read things which contradict or oppose others, nor should one read things which promise occult

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powers. It is easily possible to make a Thought-form which one can not control, as I did, and then the Form injures one.”

“Have you been to all the countries of the world?” I asked. The Japanese looked at me, and a slight twinkle appeared in his eyes.

“I was born in a small Japanese village,” he said, “and when I was old enough I entered Holy Service. For years I studied religions and occult practices. Then my Superior told me to leave and to travel in countries far beyond the oceans. For fifty years I have traveled from country to country, from continent to continent, always studying. By my thoughts I have created Powers which I could not control. Powers that live in the astral plane and which at times affect my Silver Cord. Later, maybe I shall be permitted to tell you more. For the present, I am still weak from the last attack and thus must rest. With the permission of your Guide you may visit me at a later date.”

I made my bows and left him alone in the alcove. A medical monk, seeing me leave, hastened in to him. Curiously I peeped about me, peeped at the old monks lying there in this part of the Chakpori. Then, in response to an urgent telepathic call, I hastened away to my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup.

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CHAPTER FIVE

I hurried along the corridors, rushing round corners to the peril of those who got in my way. An old monk grabbed me in passing, shook me, and said, "It is not good to have this unseemly haste, boy, it is not the way of the true Buddhist!" Then he peered into my face, recognized me as the ward of the Lama Mingyar Dondup. With a muttered sound that appeared to be "ulp!" he dropped me like a hot coal and hastened on his way. I sedately followed my own course. At the entrance to my Guide's room I stopped with such a jerk that I almost fell over; with him were two very senior abbots. My conscience was giving me a very bad time; what had I done now? Worse, which of my many 'sins' had been discovered? Senior abbots did not wait for small boys unless it was bad news for the small boys. My legs felt distinctly rubbery and I ransacked my memory to see if I had done anything that could cause my expulsion from Chakpori. One of the abbots looked at me and smiled with the warmth of an old iceberg. The other looked toward me with a face that seemed carved from a piece of the Himalayas.

My Guide laughed. "You certainly have a guilty conscience, Lobsang. Ah! These Reverend Brother Abbots are also telepathic lamas," he added with a chuckle.

The grimmer of the two abbots looked hard at me, and in a voice reminiscent of falling rocks said, "Tuesday Lobsang Rampa, The Inmost One has caused investigation to be made whereby it has been determined that you be Recognized as the present Incarnation of . . ." My head was awl, I could hardly follow what he was saying, and barely caught his concluding remarks, ". . . and the style, rank, and title of Lord Abbot be conferred upon you by virtue of this at a ceremony the time and place of which shall be determined at a later occasion."

The two abbots bowed solemnly to the Lama Mingyar Dondup, and then

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bowed as solemnly to me. Picking up a book, they filed out and gradually the sound of their footfalls became no more. I stood as one dazed, gazing down the corridor after them.

A hearty laugh, and the clasp of a hand on my shoulder brought me back to the present. "Now you know what all the running about was for. The tests have merely confirmed what we knew all the time. It calls for a special celebration between you and me, then I have some interesting news for you." He led me into another room, and there was spread a real Indian meal. Without any need to be encouraged, I set to!

Later, when I could eat no more, when even the sight of the remaining food made me feel queasy, my Guide rose and led the way back into the other room. "The Inmost One has given me permission to tell you about the Cave of the Ancients," he said, immediately adding, "rather, the Inmost One has suggested that I tell you about it." He gave me a sideways glance, then almost in a whisper, remarked, "We are sending an expedition there within a few days." I felt the excitement surge through me and had the impossible impression that perhaps I was going "home" to a place I had known before. My Guide was watching me very closely indeed. As I looked up, under the intensity of his gaze, he nodded his head. "Like you, Lobsang, I had special training, special opportunities. My own Teacher was a man who long ago passed from this life, whose empty Shell is even now in the Hall of Golden Images. With him I traveled extensively throughout the world. You, Lobsang, will have to travel alone. Now sit still and I will tell you of the finding of the Cave of the Ancients."

I wet my lips. This was what I had wanted to hear for some time. In a lamasery, as in every community, rumors were often spread in confidential corners. Some rumors were self-evident as rumors and nothing more. This, though, was different; somehow I believed what I had heard.

"I was a very young lama, Lobsang," commenced my Guide. "With my Teacher and three young lamas we were exploring some of the remoter mountain ranges. Some weeks before there had been an extraordinary loud bang, followed by a heavy rockfall. We were out to investigate matters. For days we had prowled round the base of a mighty rock pinnacle. Early on the morning of the fifth day my Teacher awakened, yet was not awake; he appeared to be in a daze. We spoke to him and received no answer. I was overcome by worry, thinking that he was ill, wondering how we should get him down the endless miles to safety. Sluggishly, as if in the grip of some strange power, he struggled to his feet, fell over, and at last stood upright. Stumbling, jerking, and moving like a man in a trance, he moved ahead. We followed almost in fear and trembling. Up the steep rock face we climbed, with showers of small stones raining

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down upon us. At last we reached the sharp edge of the range top and stood peering over. I experienced a feeling of deep disappointment; before us was a small valley now almost filled with huge boulders. Here evidently was where the rock fall had originated. Some rock-fault had developed, or some Earth tremor had occurred which had dislodged part of the mountainside. Great gashes of newly exposed rock glared at us in the bright sunlight. Moss and lichen drooped disconsolately now deprived of any support. I turned away in disgust. There was nothing here to engaged my attention, nothing but a rather large rockfall. I turned to start the descent, but was immediately halted by a whispered 'Mingyar!' One of my companions was pointing. My Teacher, still under some strange compulsion was edging down the mountainside." I sat enthralled, my Guide stopped talking for a moment and took a sip of water, then continued.

"We watched him with some desperation. Slowly he climbed down the side, toward the rock-strewn floor of the little valley. We reluctantly followed, expecting every moment to slip on that dangerous range. At the bottom, my Teacher did not hesitate, but picked a careful way across the immense boulders, until at last he reached the other side of the stone valley. To our horror he commenced to climb upwards, using hand and foot holds which were invisible to us a few yards behind him. We followed reluctantly. There was no other course open to us, we could not return and say that our senior had climbed from us, that we were afraid to follow him, dangerous though the climb was. I climbed first, picking a very careful way. It was hard rock, the air was thin. Soon the breath was rasping in my throat and my lungs were filled with a harsh, dry ache. Upon a narrow ledge perhaps five hundred feet from the valley, I lay stretched out, gasping for breath. As I glanced up, preparatory to resuming the climb, I saw the yellow robe of my Teacher disappear over a ledge high above. Grimly I clung to the mountain face, edging ever upwards. My companions, as reluctant as I, followed behind. By now we were clear of the shelter afforded by the small valley, and the keen wind was whipping our robes about us. Small stones pelted down and we were hard put to keep going." My Guide paused a moment to take another sip of water and to look to see that I was Listening. I was!

"At last," he continued, "I felt a ledge level with my questing fingers. Taking a firm grip and, calling to the others that we had reached a place where we could rest, I pulled myself up. There was a ledge, sloping slightly down towards the back and, so, quite invisible from the other side of the mountain range. At first glance the ledge appeared to be about ten feet wide. I did not stop to see further, but knelt so that I could help the others up, one by one. Soon we stood together, shivering in the wind after our exertion. Quite obvi-

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ously the rock fall had uncovered this ledge, and, as I peered more closely, there was a narrow crevice in the mountain wall. Was there? From where we stood it might have been a shadow, or the stain of dark lichen. As one, we moved forward. It was a crevice, one that was about two feet six inches wide by about five feet high. Of my Teacher there was no sign."

I could visualize the scene well. But this was not the time for introspection. I did not want to miss a word!

"I stepped back to see if my Teacher had climbed higher," my Guide went on, "but there was no sign of him. Fearfully I peered into the crevice. It was as dark as the grave. Inch by inch, painfully bent, I moved inside. About fifteen feet in I turned a very sharp corner, another, and then another. Had I not been paralyzed with fright I would have screamed with surprise; here was light, a soft silvery light, brighter than the brightest moonlight. Light that I had never seen before. The cave in which I now found myself was spacious, with a roof invisible in the darkness above. One of my companions pushed me out of the way and was in turn pushed by another. Soon the four of us stood silent and frightened gazing at the fantastic sight before us. A sight which would have made any one of us alone think that he had taken leave of his senses. The cave was more like an immense hall, it stretched away in the distance as if the mountain itself was hollow. The light was everywhere, beating down upon us from a number of globes which appeared to be suspended from the darkness of the roof. Strange machines crammed the place; machines such as we could not have imagined. Even from the high roof depended apparatus and mechanisms. Some, I saw with great amazement, were covered by what appeared to be the clearest of glass."

My eyes must have been round with amazement, for the Lama smiled at me before resuming his story.

"By now we had quite forgotten my Teacher; when he suddenly appeared we jumped straight off the ground in fright! He chuckled at our staring eyes and stricken faces. Now, we saw, he was no longer in the grip of that strange, overpowering compulsion. Together we wandered round looking at the strange machines. To us they had no meaning, they were just collections of metal and fabric in strange, exotic form. My Teacher moved toward a rather large black panel apparently built into one of the walls of the cave. As he was about to feel its surface it swung open. By now we were almost at the point of believing that the whole place was bewitched, or that we had fallen prey to some hallucinating force. My Teacher jumped back in some alarm. The black panel swung shut. Greatly daring, one of my companions stretched out his hand and the panel swung open again. A force which we could not resist propelled us for-

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ward. Uselessly fighting against every step, we were-somehow made to enter through the panel doorway. Inside it was dark, as dark as the darkness of a hermit's cell. Still under the irresistible compulsion, we moved in many feet and then sat on the floor. For minutes we sat shivering with fright. As nothing happened we regained some calmness, and then we heard a series of clicks, as if metal were tapping and scraping on metal."

Involuntarily I shivered. I had the thought that I probably would have died of fright! My Guide continued.

"Slowly, almost imperceptibly, a misty glow formed in the darkness before us. At first it was just a suspicion of blue-pink light, almost as if a ghost were materializing before our gaze. The mist-light spread, becoming brighter so that we could see the outlines of incredible machines filling this large hall, all except the centre of the floor upon which we sat. The light drew in upon itself, swirling, fading, and becoming brighter and then it formed and remained in spherical shape. I had the strange and unexplainable impression of age-old machinery creaking slowly into motion after eons of time. The five of us huddled together on the floor, literally spellbound. There came a probing inside my brain, as if demented telepathic lamas were playing, then the impression changed and became as clear as speech."

My Guide cleared his throat, and reached again for a drink, staying his hand in midair. "Let us have tea, Lobsang," he said as he rang his silver bell. The monk-attendant obviously knew what was wanted, for he came in with tea-and cakes!

"Within the sphere of light we saw pictures," said the Lama Mingyar Dondup, "hazy at first, they soon cleared and ceased to be pictures. Instead we actually saw the events."

I could contain myself no longer: "But Honorable Lama, what did you see?" I asked in a fever of impatience.

The Lama reached forward and poured himself more tea. It occurred to me then that I had never seen him eat those Indian sweet cakes. Tea, yes, he drank plenty of tea, but I had never known him take anything but the most sparing and the plainest of food. The gongs went for temple service, but the Lama did not stir. When the last of the monks had hurried by he sighed deeply, and said, "Now I will continue."

He resumed, "This is what we saw and heard, and you shall see and hear in the not too distant future. Thousands and thousands of years ago there was a high civilization upon this world. Men could fly through the air in machines which defied gravity; men were able to make machines which would impress

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thoughts upon the minds of others; thoughts which would appear as pictures. They had nuclear fission, and at last they detonated a bomb which all but wrecked the world, causing continents to sink below the oceans and others to rise. The world was decimated, and so, throughout the religions of this Earth we now have the story of the Flood.”

I was unimpressed by this latter part. “Sir!” I exclaimed, “we can see pictures like that in the Akashic Record. Why struggle up dangerous mountains just to see what we can more easily experience here?”

“Lobsang,” said my Guide gravely, “we can see all in the astral and in the Akashic Record, for the latter contains the knowledge of all that has happened. We can see but we cannot touch. In astral travel we can go places and return, but we cannot touch anything of the world. We cannot,” he smiled slightly, “take even a spare robe nor bring back a flower. So with the Akashic Record, we can see all, but we cannot examine in close detail those strange machines stored in those mountain halls. We are going to the mountains, and we are going to examine the machines.”

“How strange,” I said, “that these machines should of all the world be only in our country!”

“Oh! But you are wrong!” explained my Guide. “There is a similar chamber at a certain place in the country of Egypt. There is another chamber with identical machines located in a place called South America. I have seen them, I know where they are. These secret chambers were concealed by the peoples of old so that their artifacts would be found by a later generation when the time was ready. This sudden rock fall accidentally bared the entrance to the chamber in Tibet, and once inside we gained the knowledge of the other chambers. But the day is far advanced. Soon seven of us—and that includes you—will set out and journey once again to the Cave of the Ancients.”

For days I was in a fever of excitement. I had to keep my knowledge to myself. Others were to know that we were going to the mountains on a herb-gathering expedition. Even in such a secluded place as Lhasa there were always those on the constant lookout for financial gain; the representatives of other countries such as China, Russia, and England, some missionaries, and the traders who came from India, they were all ready to listen to where we kept our gold and our jewels, always ready to exploit anything that promised a profit for them. So, we kept the true nature of our expedition very secret indeed.

Some two weeks after that talk with the Lama Mingyar Dondup, we were ready to depart, ready for the long, long climb up the mountains, through little

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known ravines and craggy paths. The Communists are now in Tibet, so the location of the Cave of the Ancients is deliberately being concealed, for the Cave is a very real place indeed, and possession of the artifacts there would permit the Communists to conquer the world. All this, all that I write is true, except the exact way to that Cave. In a secret place the precise area, complete with references and sketches, has been noted on paper so that - when the time comes forces of freedom can find the place.

Slowly we descended the path from Chakpori Lamasery and made our way along to the Kashya Linga, passing that Park as we followed the road down to the ferry where the boatman was waiting for us with his inflated yak-hide boat drawn to the side. There were seven of us, including me, and the crossing of the River—the Kyi Chu—took some time. Eventually we were together again on the far bank. Shouldering our loads, food, rope, a spare robe each, and a few metal tools, we set out towards the southwest. We walked until the setting sun and lengthening shadows made it difficult for us to pick our way across the stony path.

Then, in the gathering darkness, we had a modest meal of tsampa before settling down to sleep in the lee side of great boulders. I fell asleep almost as soon as my head rested upon my spare robe. Many Tibetan monks of lama grade slept sitting up, as the regulations prescribe. I, and many more slept lying down, but we had to follow the rule that we could sleep only if lying on the right side. My last sight before dropping off to sleep, was that of the Lama Mingyar Dondup sitting like a carved statue against the dark night sky.

At the first light of the dawning day we awakened and had a very frugal meal, then taking up our loads, we marched on. For the whole day we walked, and for the day after. Passing the foothills, we came to the really mountainous ranges. Soon we were reduced to roping ourselves together and sending the lightest man—me!—across dangerous crevices first so that the ropes could be secured to rock pinnacles and thus afford safe passage to the heavier men. So we forged on, climbing up into the mountains. At last, as we stood at the foot of a mighty rock-face almost devoid of hand and foot holds, my Guide said, “Over this slab, down the other side, across the little valley which we shall find, and we are then at the foot of the Cave.”

We prowled round the base of the slab looking for a hand hold. Apparently other rock falls throughout the years had obliterated small ledges and clefts. After wasting almost a day we found a “chimney” of rock up which we climbed using hands and feet and wedging our backs against the other side of the “chimney”. Gasping and puffing in the rarefied air, we climbed to the top and looked over. At last before us was the valley. Staring intently at the far wall

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we could discern no cave, no fissure in the smooth rock surface. The valley below us was littered with great boulders and—far worse—a rushing mountain stream poured along the centre.

Gingerly we climbed down to the valley and made our way to the banks of that fast-running stream until we came to a part where great boulders afforded a precarious passage for those with the ability to leap from rock to rock. I, being the smallest, had not the length of leg for the jumps, and so was ignominiously hauled through the icy torrent at the end of a rope. Another unfortunate, a small somewhat rotund lama, jumped short and, he too, was hauled out at the end of a rope. On the far bank we wrung out our soaked robes and put them on again. Spray made all of us wet to the skin. Picking our way cautiously over the boulders, we crossed the valley and approached the final barrier, the rock slab. My Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, pointed to a fresh rock scar. "Look!" he said, "a further rock fall has knocked off the first ledge by which we climbed." We stood well back, trying to get a view of the ascent before us. The first ledge was about twelve feet above the ground, and there was no other way. The tallest and sturdiest lama stood with his arms outstretched, bracing himself against the rock face, then the lightest of the lamas climbed on to his shoulders and similarly braced himself.

At last I was lifted up so that I could climb on to the shoulders of the top man. With a rope around my waist, I eased myself on to the ledge.

Below me the monks called directions, while slowly, almost dying with fright, I climbed higher until I could loop the end of the rope around a projecting pinnacle of rock. I crouched to the side of the ledge as one after the other, the six lamas climbed the rope, passed me, and continued, upwards. The last one untied the rope, coiled it around his waist, and followed the others. Soon the end of the rope dangled before me, and a shout warned me to tie a loop about myself so that I could be hauled up. My height was not sufficient to reach all the ledges unaided. I rested again at a much higher stage, and the rope was carried upwards.

At last I was hauled to the topmost ledge where the others of the party awaited me. Being kind and considerate men, they had waited for me so that we could all enter the Cave together, and I confess that my heart warmed at their thoughtfulness.

"Now we have hauled up the Mascot we can continue!" growled one.

"Yes," I replied, "but the smallest one had to move first or you would not be here!"

They laughed, and turned to the well-concealed crevice. I looked in con-

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siderable astonishment. At first I could not see the entrance, all I saw was a dark shadow looking much like a dried-up watercourse, or the stain of minute lichen. Then, as we crossed the ledge, I saw that there was indeed a crack in the rock face. A big lama grabbed me by the shoulders and pushed me into the rock fissure saying, good-naturedly, "You go first, and then you can chase out any rock devils and so protect us!"

So I, the smallest and least important of the party, was the first to enter the Cave of the Ancients. I edged inside, and crept round the rock corners. Behind me I heard the shuffle and scrape as the bulkier men felt their way in. Suddenly the light burst upon me, for the moment almost paralyzing me with fright. I stood motionless by the rocky wall, gazing at the fantastic scene within. The Cave appeared to be about twice as large as the interior of the Great Cathedral of Lhasa. Unlike that Cathedral, which always was enshrouded in the dusk which butter lamps tried vainly to dispel, here was brightness more intense than that of the full moon on a cloudless night. No, it was much brighter than that; the quality of the light must have given me the impression of moonlight. I gazed upwards at the globes which provided the illumination. The lamas crowded in beside me, and, like me, they gazed at the source of light first. My Guide said, "The old records indicate that the illumination here was originally much brighter, these lamps are burning low with the passage of hundreds of centuries."

For long moments we stood still, silent, as though afraid of waking those who slept throughout the endless years. Then, moved by a common impulse, walked across the solid stone floor to the first machine standing dormant before us. We crowded around it, half afraid to touch it yet very curious as to what it could be. It was dulled with age, yet it appeared ready for instant use, if one knew what it was for and how to operate it. Other devices engaged our attention, also without result. These machines were far, far too advanced for us. I wandered off to where a small square platform of about three feet wide, with guard rails, rested on the ground. What appeared to be a long, folded metal tube extended from a nearby machine, and the platform was attached to the other end of the tube. Idly I stepped on to the railed square, wondering what it could be. The next instant I almost died of shock; the platform gave a little tremor and rose high into the air. I was so frightened that I clung in desperation to the rails. Below me the six lamas gazed upwards in consternation.

The tube had unfolded and was swinging the platform straight to one of the spheres of light. In desperation I looked over the side. Already I was some thirty feet in the air, and rising. My fear was that the source of light would burn me to a crisp, like a moth in the flame of a butter lamp. There was a "click" and the platform stopped. Inches from my face the light glowed. Timidly I stretched

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out my hand, and the whole sphere was as cold as ice.

By now I had regained my composure somewhat, and I gazed about me. Then a chilling thought struck me; how was I going to get down? I jumped from side to side, trying to work out a way of escape, but there appeared to be none. I tried to reach the long tube, hoping to climb down, but it was too far away. Just when I was becoming desperate, there was another tremor, and the platform started to descend. Hardly waiting for it to touch ground I leaped out! I was taking no risks that the thing would go up again.

Against a far wall crouched a great statue, one that sent a shiver up my spine. It was of a crouching cat body, but with the head and shoulders of a woman. The eyes appeared to be alive; the face had a half-mocking, half-quizical expression which rather frightened me. One of the lamas was on his knees on the floor, gazing intently at some strange marks. "Look!" he called, "this picture-writing shows men and cats talking, it shows what is obviously the soul leaving a body and wandering in the underworld." He was consumed with scientific zeal, poring over the pictures on the floor—"hieroglyphs" he called them—and expecting everyone else to be similarly enthused. This Lama was a highly trained man, one who learned ancient languages without any difficulties at all. The others were poking around the strange machines, trying to decide what they were for. A sudden shout made us wheel round in some alarm. The tall thin Lama was at the far wall and he seemed to have his face stuck in a dull metal box. He stood there with his head bent and the whole of his face concealed.

Two men rushed to him and dragged him away from the danger. He uttered a roar of wrath and dashed back!

"Strange!" I thought, "even the sedate, learned lamas are going crazy in this place!"

Then the tall, thin one moved aside and another took his place. So far as I could gather, they were seeing moving machines in that box. At last my Guide took pity on me and lifted me up to what apparently were "eye pieces". As I was lifted up and put my hands on a handle as instructed, I saw inside the box, men, and the machines which were in this Hall. The men were operating the machines. I saw that the platform upon which I had ascended to the light-sphere could be controlled and was a type of moveable "ladder" or rather a device which would dispense with ladders. Most of the machines here, I observed, were actual working models such as, in later years, I was to see in Science Museums throughout the world.

We moved to the panel which the Lama Mingyar Dondup had told me

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about previously, and at our approach it opened with a grating creak, so loud in the silence of the place that I think we all jumped with alarm. Inside was the darkness, profound, almost as if we had clouds of blackness swirling about us. Our feet were guided by shallow channels in the floor. We shuffled along, and when the channels ended we sat. As we did so, there came a series of clicks, like metal scraping against metal, and almost imperceptibly light stole across the darkness and pushed it aside. We looked about us and saw more machines, strange machines. There were statues here, and pictures carved in metal.

Before we had time to more than glance, the light drew in upon itself and formed a glowing globe in the centre of the Hall. Colours flickered aimlessly, and bands of light without apparent meaning swirled round the globe. Pictures formed, at first blurred and indistinct, then growing vivid and real and with three-dimensional effect. We watched intently .

This was the world of Long Long Ago. When the world was very young. Mountains stood where now there are seas, and the pleasant seaside resorts are now mountain tops. The weather was warmer and strange creatures roamed afield. This was a world of scientific progress. Strange machines rolled along, flew inches from the surface of the Earth, or flew miles up in the air. Great temples reared their pinnacles skyward, as if in challenge to the clouds. Animals and Man talked telepathically together.

But all was not bliss; politicians fought against politicians. The world was a divided camp in which each side coveted the lands of the other. Suspicion and fear were the clouds under which the ordinary man lived. Priests of both sides proclaimed that they alone were the favoured of the gods. In the pictures before us we saw ranting priests—as now—purveying their own brand of salvation. At a price! Priests of each sect taught that it was a “holy duty” to kill the enemy. Almost in the same breath they preached that Mankind throughout the world were brothers. The illogicality of brother killing brother did not occur to them.

We saw great wars fought, with most of the casualties being civilians. The armed forces, behind their armour, were mostly safe. The aged, the women and children, those who did not fight, were the ones to suffer. We saw glimpses of scientists working in laboratories, working to produce even deadlier weapons, working to produce bigger and better bugs to drop on the enemy. One sequence of pictures showed a group of thoughtful men planning what they termed a “Time Capsule” (what we called “The Cave of the Ancients”), wherein they could store for later generations working models of their machines and a complete, pictorial record of their culture and lack of it. Immense machines excavated the living rock. Hordes of men installed the models and the ma-

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chines. We saw the cold-light spheres hoisted in place, inert radioactive substances giving off light for millions of years. Inert in that it could not harm humans, active in that the light would continue almost until the end of Time itself.

We found that we could understand the language, then the explanation was shown, that we were obtaining the "speech" telepathically. Chambers such as this, or "Time Capsules", were concealed beneath the sands of Egypt, beneath a pyramid in South America, and at a certain spot in Siberia. Each place was marked by the symbol of the times; the Sphinx. We saw the great statues of the Sphinx, which did not originate in Egypt, and we received an explanation of its form. Man and animals talked and worked together in those far-off days. The cat was the most perfect animal for power and intelligence. Man himself is an animal, so the Ancients made a figure of a large cat body to indicate power and endurance, and upon the body they put the breasts and head of a woman. The head was to indicate human intelligence and reason, while the breasts indicated that Man and Animal could draw spiritual and mental nourishment each from the other. That Symbol was then as common as is Statues of Buddha, or the Star of David, or the Crucifix at the present day.

We saw oceans with great floating cities which moved from land to land. In the sky floated equally large craft which moved without sound. Which could hover, and almost instantly flash into stupendous speed. On the surface vehicles moved some inches above the ground itself, supported in the air by some method which we could not determine. Bridges stretched across the cities carrying on slender cables what appeared to be roadways. As we watched we saw a vivid flash in the sky, and one of the largest bridges collapsed into a tangle of girders and cables. Another flash, and most of the city itself vanished into incandescent gas. Above the ruins towered a strangely evil-looking red cloud, roughly in the shape of a mushroom miles high.

Our pictures faded, and we saw again the group of men who had planned the "Time Capsules". They had decided that now was the time to seal them. We saw the ceremonies, we saw the "stored memories" being fitted into the machine. We heard the speech of farewell which told us—"The People of the Future, if there be any!"—that Mankind was about to destroy itself, or such seemed probable, "and within these vaults are stored such records of our achievements and follies as may benefit those of a future race who have the intelligence to discover it, and having discovered it, be able to understand it." The telepathic voice faded out the picture screen turned black. We sat in silence, stupefied by what we had seen. Later, as we sat, the light grew again and we saw that it was actually coming from the walls of that room.

We rose and looked about us. This Hall was also littered with machines

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and there were many models of cities and bridges, all formed of some kind of stone or of some type of metal the nature of which we were unable to determine. Certain of the exhibits were protected by some quite transparent material which baffled us. It was not glass; we just did not know what the stuff was, all we knew was that it effectively prevented us from touching some of the models. Suddenly we all jumped; a baleful red eye was watching us, winking at us. I was prepared to run for it when my Guide the Lama Mingyar Dondup strode over to the machine with the red eye. He looked down at it and touched the handles. The red eye vanished. Instead on a small screen we saw a picture of another room leading from the Main Hall. Into our brains came a message, "As you leave, go to the room where you will find materials with which to seal any opening through which you entered. If you have not reached the stage of evolution where you can work our machines, seal this place and leave it intact for those who will come later."

Silently we filed out into the third room, the door of which opened at our approach. It contained many carefully sealed canisters and a "picture-thought" machine which described for us how we might open the canisters and seal the Cave entrance. We sat upon the floor and discussed that which we had seen and experienced.

"Wonderful! Wonderful!" said a lama.

"Don't see anything wonderful in it," said I, brashly. "We could have seen all that by looking at the Akashic Record. Why should we not look at those time-stream pictures and see what happened after this place was sealed up?"

The others turned inquiringly to the senior of the party, the Lama Mingyar Dondup. He nodded slightly and remarked, "Sometimes our Lobsang shows glimmerings of intelligence! Let us compose ourselves and see what happened, for I am as curious as you."

We sat in a rough circle, each facing in, and with our fingers interlocked in the appropriate pattern. My Guide started the necessary breathing rhythm and we all followed his lead. Slowly we lost our Earth identities and became as one floating in the Sea of Time. All that has ever happened can be seen by those who have the ability to consciously go into the astral and return—conscious—with the knowledge gained. Any scene in history, from an age no matter how remote, can be seen as if one were actually there.

I remembered the first time I had experienced the "Akashic Record." My Guide had been telling me about such things, and I had replied, "Yes, but what is it? How does it work? How can one get in touch with things that have passed, that are finished and gone?"

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“Lobsang!” he had replied, “you will agree that you have a memory. You can remember what happened yesterday, and the day before, and the day before that. With a little training you can remember everything that has happened in your life, you can, with training, remember even the process of being born. You can have what we term ‘total recall’ and that will take your memory back to before you were born. The Akashic Record is merely the ‘memory’ of the whole world. Everything that has ever happened on this Earth can be ‘recalled’ in just the same way as you can remember past events in your life. There is no magic involved, but we will deal with that and hypnotism—a closely related subject—at a later date.”

With our training it was easy indeed to select the point at which the Machine had faded out its pictures. We saw the procession of men and women, notables of that time no doubt, file out of the Cave. Machines with vast arms slid what appeared to be half a mountain over the entrance.

The cracks and crevices where surfaces met were carefully sealed, and the group of people and the workmen went away. Machines rolled into the distance and for a time, some months, the scene was quiet. We saw a high priest standing on the steps of an immense Pyramid, exhorting his listeners to war. The pictures impressed upon the Scrolls of Time rolled on, changed, and we saw the opposing camp. Saw the leaders ranting and raving. Time moved on. We saw streaks of white vapor in the blue of the skies, and then those skies turned red. The whole world trembled and shook. We, watching, experienced vertigo. The darkness of the night fell over the world. Black clouds, shot with vivid flames, rolled around the whole globe. Cities flamed briefly and were gone.

Across the land surged the raging seas. Sweeping all before it, a giant wave, taller than the tallest building had been, roared across the land, its crest bearing aloft the flotsam of a dying civilization. The Earth shook and thundered in agony, great chasms appeared and closed again like the gaping maws of a giant. The mountains waved like willow twigs in a storm, waved, and sank beneath the seas. Land masses rose from the waters and became mountains. The whole surface of the world was in a state of change, of continuous motion. A few scattered survivors, out of millions, fled shrieking to the newly risen mountains. Others, afloat in ships that somehow survived the upheaval, reached the high ground and fled into any hiding place they could find. The Earth itself stood still, stopped its direction of rotation, and then turned in the opposite direction. Forests flashed from trees to scattered ash in the twinkling of an eye. The surface of the Earth was desolate, ruined, charred to a black crisp. Deep in holes, or in the lava-tunnels of extinct volcanoes, a scattered handful of Earth’s population, driven insane by the catastrophe, cowered and gibbered in their

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terror. From the black skies fell a whitish substance, sweet to the taste, sustaining of life. In the course of centuries the Earth changed again; the seas were now land, and the lands that had been were now seas. A low-lying plain had its rocky walls cracked and sundered, and the waters rushed in to form the Sea now known as the Mediterranean. Another sea nearby sank through a gap in the sea bed, and as the waters left and the bed dried, the Sahara Desert was formed. Over the face of the Earth wandered wild tribes who, by the light of their camp fires, told of the old legends, told of the Flood of Lemuria, and Atlantis. They told, too, of the day the Sun Stood Still.

The Cave of the Ancients lay buried in the silt of a half-drowned world. Safe from intruders, it rested far beneath the surface of the land. In course of time, fast-running streams would wash away the silt, the debris, and allow the rocks to stand forth in the sunlight once more. At last, heated by the sun and cooled by a sudden icy shower, the rock face would split with thunderous noise and we would be able to enter.

We shook ourselves, stretched our cramped limbs, and rose wearily to our feet. The experience had been a shattering one. Now we had to eat, to sleep, and on the morrow we would look about us again so that we might learn something. Then, our mission accomplished, we perhaps would wall up the entrance as directed. The Cave would sleep again in peace until men of goodwill and high intelligence would come again. I wandered to the Cave mouth and looked down upon the desolation, upon the riven rocks, and I wondered what a man of the Old Times would think if he could rise from his grave to stand beside me, here.

As I turned in to the interior I marveled at the contrast; a lama was lighting a fire with flint and tinder, igniting some dried yak dung which we had brought for that purpose. Around us were the machines and artifacts of a by-gone age. We—modern men—were heating water over a dung fire, surrounded by such marvelous machines that they were beyond our comprehension. I sighed, and turned my thoughts to that of mixing tea and tsampa.

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CHAPTER SIX

The mid-morning Service had ended; we boys rushed along to our classroom, shoving and pushing in an effort not to be the last one in. Not because of our interest in education, but because the Master at this class had the horrid habit of taking a swipe with his cane at the last one in! I, joy of joys, managed to be first one in and basked in the glow of approval of the Master's smile. Impatiently he motioned the others to hurry, standing by the door and cuffing those who even appeared to be slow. At last we were all seated, sitting cross legged upon the seat-mats spread on the floor. As is our custom, we had our backs toward the Master, who constantly patrolled behind us so that we never knew where he was and thus we had to work hard.

"Today we will discuss how all religions are similar," he intoned. "We have observed how the story of the Flood is common to all beliefs throughout the world. Now we will give our attention to the theme of the Virgin Mother. Even the meanest intelligence," he said, looking hard at me, "knows that our Virgin Mother, the Blessed Dolma, the Virgin Mother of Mercy, corresponds to the Virgin Mother of certain sects of the Christian Faith."

Hurrying footsteps stopped at the entrance of the classroom. A monk-messenger entered and bowed low to the Master. "Salutations to you, Learned One," he murmured. "The Lord Lama Mingyar Dondup presents his compliments and requests that the boy Tuesday Lobsang Rampa be released from class immediately—the matter is urgent"

The Master scowled; "Boy!" he thundered, "you are a nuisance and a disturber of the class, get out!"

Hastily I jumped to my feet, bowed to the Master, and rushed after the hurrying Messenger. "What is it?" I gasped.

"Don't know," he said, "wondered myself. Holy Lama Dondup has surgi-

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cal things ready, horses ready too." We hurried on.

"Ah! Lobsang! So you can hurry!" laughed my Guide as we came upon him. "We are going down to the Village of Sho where our surgical services are required." He mounted his horse and motioned for me to mount mine.

This was always a difficult operation; horses and I never seemed to be of one mind when it came to mounting. I walked toward the horse, and that creature walked sideways away from me. I slipped round to the other side and took a running jump before the horse knew what was happening. Then I tried to emulate mountain lichen with the tenacity of my grip. Snorting with exasperated resignation, the horse turned without help from me and followed the horse of my Guide down the path. This horse of mine had the horrible habit of stopping at the steepest parts and looking over the edge, lowering his head and doing a kind of shimmy. I firmly believe he had a (misplaced!) sense of humour and was fully aware of the effect he had upon me.

We clattered down the path and soon passed the Pargo Kaling, or Western Gate, and thus came upon the Village of Sho. My Guide led the way through the streets until he came to a big building which I recognized as the prison. Guards hurried out and took our horses. I picked up the two cases of my Guide the Lama Mingyar Dondup, and carried them into the gloomy place. This was unpleasant, a horrible spot indeed, I could smell the fear, see the evil thought-forms of wrongdoers. It was indeed a place the atmosphere of which made the hairs stand out upon the back of my neck.

I followed my Guide into a fairly large room. The sunlight was streaming through the windows. A number of guards were standing about, and waiting to greet the Lama Mingyar Dondup was a Magistrate of Sho. While they talked I looked about me. This, I decided, was where criminals were tried and sentenced. Around the walls were records and books. On the floor, to one side, was a groaning bundle. I looked toward it, and at the same time heard the Magistrate talking to my Guide; "Chinese a spy we think, Honourable Lama. He was trying to climb the Holy Mountain, apparently trying to creep into the Potala. He slipped and fell. How far? Perhaps a hundred feet. He is in a bad way." My Guide moved forward, and I went to his side. A man pulled back the covers and before us we saw a Chinese man, of about middle age. He was fairly small and looked as though he had been remarkably agile, something like an acrobat, I thought. Now he was groaning with pain, his face wet with perspiration, and his complexion of a muddy greenish tinge.

The man was in a bad state, shivering and grinding his teeth in his agony. The Lama Mingyar Dondup looked at him with compassion. "Spy, would-be assassin, or whatever he is, we must do something for him," he said. My Guide

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knelt beside the man and put his hands on the suffering wretch's temples and gazed into his eyes. Within seconds the sick man relaxed, eyes half open, a vague smile on his lips. My Guide pulled the coverings further aside then bent over his legs. I felt sick at what I saw; the man's leg bones protruding through his trousers. The legs appeared to be completely shattered. With a sharp knife my Guide cut off the man's clothing. There was a gasp from the onlookers as they saw the leg, with bones completely shattered from feet to thighs. The Lama gently felt them.

The injured man did not stir or flinch, he was deeply hypnotised. The leg bones grated and sounded like half-filled sand bags. "The bones are too shattered to set," said my Guide, "his legs seem to be pulverized we shall have to amputate them."

"Honourable Lama," said the Magistrate "can you make him tell us what he was doing? We fear he was an assassin."

"We will remove his legs first," replied the Lama, "then we can ask him." He bent over the man again and gazed once more into his eyes. The Chinese relaxed even more and appeared to go into a deep sleep. I had the bags unrolled and the sterilizing herbal fluid ready in the bowl. My Guide dipped in his hands so that they could soak. I had his instruments already in another bowl. At his direction I washed the man's body and legs.

Touching those legs sent a peculiar feeling through me; it felt as though everything was shattered. Now they were a blue, mottled colour, with the veins standing out like black cords. Under the directions of my Guide, who was still soaking his hands, I placed sterilized bands as high as I could on the Chinese man's legs, high, where they joined the body. Sliding a stick into a loop I turned until the pressure stopped the circulation. Very quickly the Lama Mingyar Dondup seized a knife and cut the flesh in a vee. At the point of the vee he sawed through the leg bone—what was left of it—and then tucked in the two flaps of the vee so that the end of the bone was protected by a double layer of flesh. I passed him thread made from the sterilized parts of yak, and speedily he stitched the flaps tightly together.

Slowly, carefully, I eased the pressure of the band about the man's leg, ready to tighten again should the stump bleed. The stitches held, no blood flowed. Behind us a guard retched violently, turned chalk white and fell to the floor in a faint!

Carefully my Guide bandaged the stump and again washed his hands in the solution. I gave my attention to the other leg, the left, and slid the stick through the loop in the band. The Lama nodded, and I turned the stick once

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more to shut off the blood from that leg. Soon that limb was lying beside the other. My Guide turned to a staring guard and told him to take the legs and wrap them up in cloth.

"We must return these legs to the Chinese Mission," said the Lama, "or they will say that their man has been tortured. I shall ask the Inmost One that this man be returned to his people. His mission does not matter; it failed as all such attempts will."

"But Honourable Lama!" said the Magistrate, "The man should be forced to tell what he was doing, and why."

My Guide said nothing, but turned again to the hypnotized man and looked deeply into his now-opened eyes. "What were you doing?" he asked. The man groaned and rolled his eyes. My Guide asked him again; "What were you going to do? Were you going to assassinate a High Person within the Potala?" Froth formed around the Chinese man's mouth then, reluctantly, he nodded his head in confirmation. "Speak!" commanded the Lama. "A nod is not enough." So, slowly, painfully, the story came out. An assassin paid to do murder, paid to stir up trouble in a peaceful country. An assassin who had failed, as all would fail, through not knowing of our safety devices!

As I was musing upon this the Lama Mingyar Dondup rose to his feet. "I will go to see the Inmost One; Lobsang, you stay here and guard this man," he said.

The man groaned. "You kill me?" he asked weakly.

"No!" I replied, "we kill no one." I moistened his lips and mopped his brow. Soon he was still again; I think he slept after the exhausting ordeal.

The Magistrate looked on sourly, thinking that priests were crazy to want to save a would-be assassin. The day dragged on. Guards went and others came. I felt my interior crumble with hunger. At last I heard familiar footsteps, and the Lama Mingyar Dondup strode into the room. First he came and looked at the patient, making sure that the man was as comfortable as the circumstances permitted and that the stumps were not bleeding. Rising to his feet, he looked at the senior lay official, and said, "By virtue of the authority vested in me by the Inmost One I command you to obtain two litters, immediately, and take this man and his legs to the Chinese Mission." He turned to me; "You will accompany these men and report to me if they are unnecessarily rough in their handling of the man's litter." I felt distinctly gloomy; here was this assassin with his legs cut off, and my stomach rumbling away as empty of food as a temple drum.

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While the men were absent in search of litters I rushed outside to where I had seen the officials drinking tea! In a haughty voice I demanded—and got—a generous helping. Hastily cramming tsampa down my throat, I rushed back.

Silently, sullenly, the men filed into the room after me, carrying two rough litters, cloth stretched between the poles. Grumpily they picked up the two legs and put them on one litter. Gently, under the keen eyes of the Lama Mingyar Dondup, they placed the Chinese man upon the other litter. A cover was placed over his body and tied under the litter so that he could not be jolted off. My Guide turned to the senior lay official and said, "You will accompany these men and you will present my compliments to the Chinese Ambassador and tell him we are returning one of his men. You, Lobsang," he turned to me, "will accompany them and on your return you will report to me." He turned away, and the men trudged out of the room. The air was chilly outside and I shivered in my light robe. Down the Mani Lhakhang we trudged, the men carrying the legs first, then the two men carrying the litter with the Chinese. I walked to one side and the senior lay official walked on the other. We turned off to the right, passed the two Parks and headed on towards the Chinese Mission.

With the Happy River glinting ahead of us, showing flecks of bright light through gaps in the trees, we came to the farthest wall of the Mission. Grunting, the men put down their loads for a time while they rested their aching muscles and looked curiously at the Mission wall.

The Chinese were very offensive to any who tried to intrude on their ground. There had been cases of small boys being shot "by accident" when they trespassed as small boys will. Now we were going inside! Spitting on their hands, the men stooped and picked up the litters again. Marching on we turned left into the Lingkor Road and entered the Mission grounds. Surly men came to the door and the senior official said, "I have the honour to return to you one of your men who attempted to stray into Holy Ground. He fell and his legs had to be amputated. Here are the legs for your inspection." Scowling guards seized the handles and rushed into the building with the man and his legs. Others, at gunpoint, waved us away. We retreated down the path.

I slipped unseen behind a tree. The others marched on. Screams and shouts rent the air. Looking about, I saw that there were no guards; they had all entered the Mission. On a foolish impulse, I left the doubtful security of the tree and ran silently to the window. The injured man was lying on the floor, one guard was sitting on his chest, while two more sat on his arms. A fourth man was applying burning cigarettes to his amputated stumps. Suddenly the fourth man jumped to his feet, drew his revolver and shot the injured man between the eyes.

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A twig cracked behind me. Like a flash I dropped to my knees and turned about. Another Chinese guard had appeared and was aiming a rifle at where my head had been. I dived between his legs, tripping him and causing him to drop his rifle. Hastily I ran from tree to tree. Shots came ripping through the low branches and there was the thud of running feet behind me. Here the advantage was wholly mine; I was fleet of foot and the Chinese stopped often to take shots at me. I rushed to the back of the garden—the gate was now guarded—climbed up a convenient tree and inched along a branch so that I could drop on to the top of the wall. Seconds later I was back on the road ahead of my countrymen who had carried in the injured man. As soon as they heard my story they hurried up their footsteps.

No longer were they tarrying in the hope of seeing some excitement; now they wanted to avoid it. A Chinese guard dropped off the top of the wall onto the road and glared at me most suspiciously. I blandly gazed back at him. With a scowl and a muttered oath which reflected adversely on my parentage he turned away. We put on speed!

Back at the Village of Sho the men left me. Looking somewhat apprehensively over my shoulder, I hurried on and soon was speeding up the path to Chakpori. An old monk resting by the wayside called after me, "What is wrong with you Lobsang? You look as if all the Demons were after you!"

I rushed on and, breathless, entered the room of my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup. For a moment I stood panting, trying to get my breath. "Ow!" I gasped at last, "The Chinese murdered that man; they shot him!" In a torrent of words I told all that had happened.

My Guide was silent for a moment. Then he said, "You will see much violence in your life, Lobsang, so do not be too distressed at this event. This is the usual method of diplomacy; kill those who fail and disclaim spies who are caught. It goes on all over the world, in all countries of the world."

Sitting in front of my Guide, recovering in the calm serenity of his presence, I thought of another matter which was troubling me. "Sir!" I exclaimed, "How does hypnotism work?"

He looked across at me with a smile on his lips. "When did you eat last?" he queried.

With a rush all my hunger came back. "Oh, about twelve hours ago," I replied somewhat ruefully.

"Then let us eat now, here, and then when we are somewhat refreshed we can discuss hypnotism." He waved me to silence, and sat in the attitude of

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meditation. I caught his telepathic message to his servants—food and tea. I caught, too, a telepathic message to someone at the Potala, someone who had to go to the Inmost One in a hurry to give a detailed report. But my “interception” of the telepathic message was interrupted by the entry of a servant bringing food and tea!

I sat back, replete with food, feeling even more uncomfortably full. I had had a hard day, I had been hungry for many many hours, but (the thought troubled me internally) had I eaten too much too unwisely now? Suddenly, suspiciously, I looked up. My Guide was gazing down upon me with obvious amusement on his face. “Yes, Lobsang,” he remarked, “you have eaten too much. I hope you will be able to follow my talk on hypnotism.” He studied my flushed face and his own look softened: “Poor Lobsang, you have had a hard day. Go to your rest now and we will continue our discussion on the morrow.” He rose to his feet and left the room. I climbed wearily to mine and almost tottered along the corridor. Sleep! That was all I wanted. Food? Pfaugh! I had had too much of that.

I reached my bedplace and rolled myself in my robes. Sleep was troubled indeed; I had nightmares in which legless Chinese chased me through wooded groves and other Chinese armed with guns kept jumping on my shoulders in an attempt to bring me down.

“Thump” went my head on the ground. One of the Chinese guards was kicking me. “Thump!” went my head again. Blearily I opened my eyes to find an acolyte energetically banging my head and kicking me in a desperate attempt to wake me. “Lobsang!” he exclaimed as he saw that my eyes were open. “Lobsang, I thought you were dead. You have slept all through the night, missed the Services, and only the intervention of your Master, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, has saved you from the Proctors. Wake up!” he shouted, as I almost lapsed into sleep again.

Consciousness flooded into me. Through the windows I saw the early morning rays of sunlight peering over the high Himalayas and lighting up the tallest buildings in the valley, showing the golden roofs of the distant Sera, glowing along the top of the Pargo Kaling. Yesterday I had gone to the Village of Sho—ah! that was not a dream. Today, today I hoped to miss some lessons and learn direct from my beloved Mingyar Dondup. Learn about Hypnotism, too!

Soon I had finished my breakfast and was on my way to the classroom, not to stay and recite from the hundred and eight Sacred Books, but to explain why I was not!

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“Sir!” I said, as I saw the Teacher just going into the classroom, “Sir! I have to attend the Lama Mingyar Dondup this day. I beg to be excused from class.”

“Ah, yes! my boy,” said the Teacher in amazingly genial tones. “I have had a word with the Holy Lama your Guide. He was good enough to comment favourably upon your progress under my care; I confess I am most gratified, most gratified.” Astonishingly, he extended his hand and patted me upon the shoulder before entering the classroom. Bemused, and wondering what sort of magic had been worked upon him, I wandered off towards the Lamas’ Quarters.

On I strolled without a care in the world. Past a half-opened doorway. “Ow!” I exclaimed suddenly, coming to a sudden stop. “Pickled walnuts!” The scent of them was strong. Backtracking silently, I peered through the doorway. An old monk was staring down at the stone floor, muttering things which were not his prayers, mourning the loss of a whole jar of pickled walnuts which had somehow been obtained from India.

“May I help you, Reverend Lama?” I asked politely. The old man turned a ferocious face to me and made such a rejoinder that I raced off along the corridor while I was still able. “All those words just for a few walnuts!” I said disgustedly to myself.

“Come in!” said my Guide as I approached his door. “I thought you had gone back to sleep.”

“Sir!” I said, “I have come to you for instruction. I am anxious to know the nature of hypnotism.”

“Lobsang,” said my Guide, “you have to learn much more than that. You have to learn the basis for hypnotism first. Otherwise you do not know exactly what you do. Sit down.”

I sat, cross legged of course, upon the floor. My Guide sat opposite me. For a time he seemed lost in thought, and then said: “By now you should have realized that everything is vibration, electricity. The body has many different chemicals in its composition. Certain of those chemicals are conveyed to the brain by the blood stream. The brain, you know, has the best supply of blood and its contained chemicals. Those ingredients, potassium, manganese, carbon, and many others, form the brain tissue. Interaction between them makes a peculiar oscillation of molecules which we term an ‘electric current’. When one thinks one sets in motion a chain of circumstances which results in the formulation of this electric current and, hence, ‘brain waves’.”

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I pondered the whole matter; I could not see all this. If there were 'electric currents' in my brain, why did I not feel the shock? That boy who was flying a kite, I recalled, had been doing so in a thunderstorm. I remembered the vivid blue flash as lightning traveled along his wet kite line; I remembered, with a shudder, how he had fallen to the ground as a dried-up, fried crisp of flesh. And once I too had had a shock from the same source, a mere tingle compared to the other, but "tingle" enough to throw me a dozen feet.

"Honourable Lama!" I expostulated, "how can there be electricity in the brain? It would drive a man mad with the pain!"

My Guide sat and laughed at me. "Lobsang!" he chuckled, "the shock you once had has given you a wholly incorrect idea of electricity. The amount of electricity in the brain is of a very small order indeed. Delicate instruments can measure it and can actually chart the variations as one thinks or undertakes some physical action."

The thought of one man measuring another man's voltage was almost too much for me, I started to laugh. My Guide merely smiled and said: "Let us this afternoon walk over to the Potala. The Inmost One has there a device which will enable us to talk more easily on this electrical subject. Go now and entertain yourself—have a meal, put on your best robe and meet me here when the sun is at noon." I rose to my feet, bowed, and went out.

For two hours I wandered around, climbing to the roof and idly flicking small pebbles on to the unsuspecting heads of monks passing below. Tiring of that sport, I lowered myself head first through a trap-hatch leading down to a dark corridor. Hanging upside down by my feet I was just in time to hear approaching footsteps. I could not see, because the trap-hatch was at a corner. Sticking out my tongue, and making a ferocious face I waited. An old man came round the corner and, not being able to see me, bumped into me. My wet tongue touched his cheek. He emitted a shriek, and dropping the tray he was carrying with a crash, he disappeared at a speed surprising in such an old man. I too had a surprise; as the old monk bumped into me it dislodged my feet from their precarious hold. I fell on my back into the corridor. The trap-hatch fell with a resounding crash and a whole load of choking dust fell on top of me! Scrambling dizzily to my feet I made off as fast as I could in the opposite direction.

Still suffering from the shock, I changed my robe and had a meal; I was not shocked enough to forget that!

Punctually, as the shadows vanished, and the day was at noon, I presented myself before my Guide. With some effort he composed his features as

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he saw me. "An elderly monk, Lobsang, swears that he was beset by a devil in the North corridor. A party of three lamas has gone there to exorcise the devil. No doubt I shall be doing my part if I take him—you—to the Potala as arranged. Come!" He turned and walked out of the room. I followed behind, casting apprehensive glances about me. After all, one never knew for sure what would happen if the Lamas were exorcising. I had vague visions of finding myself flying through the air to some unknown, probably uncomfortable, destination.

Out we went, into the open. Two ponies were being held by grooms. The Lama Mingyar Dondup mounted and slowly rode off down the mountain. I was helped on to my pony, and one of the grooms playfully gave him a slap. The pony felt playful too. Down went his head. Up went his rear, and off his back in an arc went I. A groom again held the animal while I picked myself from the ground and brushed off some of the dust. Then I mounted again, watching warily in case the grooms tried anything else.

That pony knew he had a duffer aboard; the moronic animal kept walking to the most dangerous places and stopping on the very edge. Then he would lower his head and gaze earnestly at the rocky ground so far below. At last I dismounted and towed the pony behind me. It was quicker. At the bottom of Iron Mountain I again mounted and followed my Guide into the Village of Sho. He had some business there which detained us for a few moments. Time enough for me to regain my breath and my shattered composure. Then, mounting again, we climbed up the broad, stepped Way to the Potala. Gladly I relinquished my pony to the waiting grooms. Even more gladly I followed the Lama Mingyar Dondup to his own apartment. My pleasure was increased by the knowledge that I should be staying here for a day or so.

Soon it was time to attend the service in the Temple below. Here at the Potala, services were—I thought—excessively formal, the discipline too strict. Having had more than enough of excitement for one day, as well as suffering from many small bruises, I remained on my best behavior and the service was concluded without incident.

It was now an accepted thing that when my Guide was at the Potala I should occupy a small room adjoining his. I went there and sat down to await events, knowing that the Lama Mingyar Dondup was engaged in matters of State with a very senior official who had recently returned from India. It was fascinating to look out of the window and see the City of Lhasa in the distance. The view was one of surpassing beauty; willow fringed lakes, golden gleams from the Jo Kang, and the milling throng of pilgrims who clamored at the foot of the Holy Mountain in the hope of seeing the Inmost One (who was in residence) or at least some high official. An interminable string of traders and their beasts

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were just wending their slow way past the Pargo Kaling. I dwelt for a moment upon their exotic loads, but was interrupted by a soft footstep behind me.

"We will have tea, Lobsang, and then we will continue with our talk," said my Guide who had just entered. I followed him to his room where was laid out fare very different from that normally served to a poor monk. Tea, of course, but sweet things from India too. It was all very much to my taste. Normally monks never talk when they eat; it is considered to be disrespectful to the food, but on this occasion my Guide told me that the Russians were attempting to make trouble for Tibet, were attempting to infiltrate spies. Soon we finished our meal and then made our way to the rooms where the Dalai Lama stored many strange devices from far-off lands. For a time we just looked about us, the Lama Mingyar Dondup pointing out odd objects and explaining their uses. At last he stopped in a corner of one room and said, "Look at this, Lobsang!" I moved to his side and was not at all impressed with what I saw. Before me, on a small table, stood a glass jar. Inside there depended two thin threads, each supporting at their far end a small sphere of something that appeared to be pith from a willow tree.

"It is pith!" commented my Guide dryly, when I remarked upon the matter. "You, Lobsang," said the Lama, "think of electricity as something that gives you a shock. There is another kind, or manifestation, which we term static electricity. Now watch!"

From the table the Lama Mingyar Dondup took a shiny rod, possibly about twelve to fourteen inches long. Briskly he rubbed the rod on his robe and then brought it close to the glass jar. To my intense surprise the two pith spheres flew violently apart, and stayed apart even when the rod was withdrawn. "Keep watching!" exhorted my Guide. Well, that is what I was doing. After some minutes the pith balls slowly sank down again under the normal pull of gravity. Soon they were hanging straight down as they had before the experiment.

"You try it," commanded the Lama, extending the black rod to me.

"By the Blessed Dolman!" I cried, "I'm not touching that thing!"

My Guide laughed heartily at my more-than-distressed expression. "Try it, Lobsang," he said mildly, "for I have never played a trick on you yet."

"Yes," I grumbled, "but there is always a first time."

He pressed the rod upon me. Gingerly I took the awful object. Reluctantly, half-heatedly (expecting a shock at any moment) I rubbed the rod on my robe. There was no sensation, no shock or tingle. At last I held it toward the glass jar and wonder of wonders!—the pith balls flew apart again.

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"As you observe, Lobsang," remarked my Guide, "electricity is flowing, yet even you feel no shock. Such is the electricity of the brain. Come with me."

He led me to another table upon which rested a most remarkable device. It appeared to be a wheel upon whose surface there were innumerable metal plates. Two rods were fixed so that a spray of wires from each lightly touched two of the metal plates. From the rods wires trailed to two metal spheres which were about a foot apart. The thing made no sense at all to me. "Statue of a devil," I thought.

My Guide confirmed that impression by his next move. Grasping a handle which projected from the back of the wheel he gave it a very hearty twirl. With a growl of rage the wheel sprang to life; flashing and winking. From the metal spheres a great tongue of blue lightning leaped, hissing and crackling. There was a strange smell as if the air itself were burning. I waited no longer; this most definitely was not the place for me. I dived beneath the biggest table and tried to wriggle my way to the far distant door.

The hissing and crackling stopped, to be replaced by another sound. I checked my flight and listened in amazement, was it the sound of laughter? Never! Nervously I peered from my sanctuary. There was the Lama Mingyar Dondup almost doubled up with laughter. Tears of merriment were trickling from his eyes, while his face was red with amusement. He seemed to be gasping for breath, too.

"Oh, Lobsang!" he said at last, "that is the first time I have known anyone to be frightened of a Wimshurst Machine. These devices are used in many foreign countries that the properties of electricity may be demonstrated."

I crept out, feeling rather silly, and had a closer look at the strange machine. The Lama said, "I will hold these two wires, Lobsang, and you turn the handle as fast as you can. You will see lightning flash all over me, but it will not harm me or cause me pain. Let us try. Who knows? Perhaps you will have an opportunity to laugh at me!" He took two wires, one in each hand, and nodded for me to start.

Grimly I seized the handle and turned as fast as I could. I shouted in amazement as great purple and violet bands of lightning streamed across my Guide's hands and face.

He was quite unperturbed. Meanwhile the smell had started again. "Ozone, quite harmless," said my Guide.

At last I was persuaded to hold the wires with the Lama turning the handle. The hissing and crackling was fearsome in the extreme, but as for feeling—it

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was more like a cool breeze than anything else! The Lama took various glass things from a box and one by one connected them to the machine by wires. As he turned the handle I saw a bright flame burning inside a glass bottle, and, in other bottles, a cross and other metal shapes outlined by living fire. But nowhere could I get a feeling of electric shock. With this Wimshurst Machine my Guide demonstrated how a person who was not clairvoyant could be enabled to see the human aura, but more of that later.

Eventually, the fading light caused us to desist from our experiments and to return to the Lama's room. First there was the evening service again, our life in Tibet seemed to be completely circumscribed by the needs for religious observance. With the service behind us we returned once again to my Guide the Lama Mingyar Dondup's apartment, here we sat in our usual cross legged attitude upon the floor with the little table, perhaps fourteen inches high, between us.

"Now Lobsang," said my Guide, "we have to get down to this matter of hypnotism, but first of all we have to decide upon the operation of the human brain. I have shown you—I hope!—that there can be the passage of an electric current without one experiencing pain or discomfort therefrom. Now, I want you to consider that when a person thinks he generates an electric current. We need not go into the matter of how an electric current stimulates muscle fibre and causes reaction, our whole interest for the moment is the electric current—the brain waves which have been so clearly measured and charted by Western medical science."

I confess that I found this to be of some interest to me because in my small and humble way it had already occurred to me that thought had force, because I remembered that parchment roughly perforated cylinder which I had used at times in the Lamasery, and which I had caused to rotate by thought power alone.

"Your attention is wandering, Lobsang!" said my Guide.

"I am sorry, Honourable Master," I replied, "I was merely reflecting upon the undoubted nature of thought waves, and considering the amusement I derived from that cylinder to which you introduced me some months ago."

My Guide looked at me and said, "You are an entity, an individual, and you have your own thoughts. You may consider that you will do some course of action, such as lift that rosary. Even in considering an action your brain causes electricity to flow from its chemical constituents, and the wave from the electricity prepares your muscle for the impending action. If a greater electrical force should occur in your brain, then your original intention of lifting that ro-

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sary would be thwarted. It is easy to see that if I can persuade you that you cannot lift that rosary, then your brain—being beyond your immediate control—will generate and send out an opposing wave. You will then be unable to lift the rosary or do the contemplated action.”

I looked at him, and thought of the affair, and it really did not make much sense to me, for how could he influence how much electricity my brain was generating? I thought about it, and looked at him, and wondered if I should voice my doubt. There was no necessity to, however, for he divined it and hastened to set my mind at rest.

“I can assure you, Lobsang, that what I say is demonstrable fact, and in a Western country we should be able to prove all this under a piece of apparatus which would chart the three basic brain waves; here however, we have no such facilities and we can only debate the matter. The brain generates electricity, it generates waves, and if you decide to lift your arm then your brain generates waves on the intention of your decision. If I can—in rather technical words—feed a negative charge into your brain, then your original intention would be frustrated. In other words, you would be hypnotized!”

This really did begin to make sense; I had seen that Wimshurst Machine, and I had seen various demonstrations conducted with its assistance, and I had seen how it was possible to alter the polarity of a current and so cause it to flow in the opposite direction.

“Honourable Lama,” I exclaimed, “how is it possible for you to feed a current into my brain? You cannot take off the top of my head and put some electricity inside; how then may it be done?”

“My dear Lobsang,” said my Guide, “it is not necessary to get into your head because I do not have to generate any electricity and put it into you; I can make appropriate suggestions whereby you will be convinced of the accuracy of my statement or suggestions, and you will then—without any voluntary control on your part—generate that negative current yourself.”

He looked at me and said, “I am most unwilling to hypnotize anyone against their will except in a case of medical or surgical necessity, but I think that with your cooperation it might be a good idea to demonstrate a simple little matter of hypnotism.”

I exclaimed hastily, “Oh yes, I should love to experience hypnotism!”

He rather smiled at my impetuosity and asked, “Now, Lobsang, what would you be unwilling to do, normally? I ask you that because I want to hypnotize you into doing something that you would not willingly do so that you

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personally can be assured that in doing this thing you are acting under involuntary influence.”

I thought for a moment, and really I hardly knew what to say, there were so many things that I did not want to do! I was saved further thought on this matter by my Guide, who exclaimed, “I know! You were not at all anxious to read that rather involved passage in the fifth volume of the Kangyur. You were, I believe, rather afraid that some of the terms used would betray you, and betray the fact that on that particular subject you had not studied so assiduously as desired by your tutor!”

I felt rather gloomy about that, and I confess I also felt my cheeks redden with some embarrassment. It was perfectly true, there was a particularly difficult passage in The Book which caused me extreme difficulty, however, in the interests of science I was quite prepared to be persuaded to read it. Actually I had almost a phobia against reading that particular passage!

My Guide smiled and said, “The Book is over there just to the side of the window bring it here, turn to that passage and read it aloud, and if you will try not to read it—if you will try to mess up the whole thing—then that will be a much better test.” I reluctantly went across and fetched The Book, and unwillingly turned over the pages. Our Tibetan pages are much bigger, much heavier, than Western books. I fumbled and fumbled, and made the thing as long-drawn-out as possible. In the end, though, I turned to the appropriate passage, and I confess that this particular passage, because of some earlier incident with a tutor, really did make me feel almost physically sick.

I stood there with The Book in front of me, and try as I might I could not articulate those words. It may seem strange but it is a fact that because I had been so ill-used by an non-understanding tutor I had developed a real hatred for those sacred sentences. My Guide looked at me—nothing more—just looked at me, and then something seemed to click inside my head, and I found to my very considerable surprise that I was reading, not just “reading” but reading fluently, easily, without a trace of hesitation.

As I reached the end of the paragraph I had the most inexplicable sensation. I put down The Book and I went to the middle of the room and I stood on my head! “I’m going crazy!” I thought. “Whatever will my Guide think of me for behaving in this utterly foolish manner?” Then it occurred to me, that my Guide was making me—influencing me—to behave thus.

Quickly I jumped to my feet, and found that he was smiling most benevolently upon me. “It really is a most easy matter, Lobsang, to influence a person, there is no difficulty at all when one has mastered the basic matter. I

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merely thought of certain things and you picked up my thoughts telepathically, and that caused your brain to react in the manner I had anticipated. Thus certain fluctuations in your normal brain pattern were caused which produced this quite interesting result!”

“Honourable Lama!” I said, “then does it mean that if we can put an electric current into a person’s brain we can make that person do anything we want?”

“No, it does not mean that at all,” said my Guide. “It means instead, that if we can persuade a person to do a certain course of action, and the course of action which we desire to persuade is not contrary to that person’s belief, then he will undoubtedly do it merely because his brain waves have been altered, and no matter what his original intention, he will react as suggested by the hypnotist. In most cases a person receives suggestions from a hypnotist, there is no real influence exerted by the hypnotist other than the influence of suggestion. The hypnotist, by certain little tricks, is able to induce a course of action in the victim contrary to that which was originally contemplated.”

He looked at me seriously for a moment and then added, “Of course you and I have other powers than that. You will be able to hypnotize a person instantly even against a person’s wishes, that gift is being made unto you because of the peculiar nature of your life, because of the very great hardships, because of the exceptional work which you are going to have to achieve.”

He sat back and gazed at me in order that he might determine if I had assimilated the information which he had given me. Satisfied that I had, he continued, “Later—not yet—you will be taught much more about hypnotism and how to hypnotize quickly. I want to tell you that you will also have your telepathic powers increased, because when you journey from here far out into other countries you will need to keep in touch with us all the time, and the quickest and the most accurate way is by telepathy.” I felt quite gloomy over all this. I seemed the whole time to be learning something fresh, and the more I learned the less time I had for myself; it seemed to me that more and more work was being added to me but none was being lifted off!

“But, Honourable Lama!” I said, “how does telepathy work? Nothing appears to happen between us, yet you know almost everything I think, especially when I do not want you to!”

My Guide looked at me and laughed, and said, “It really is quite a simple matter, telepathy; one merely has to control the brain waves. Look at it in this way; you think, your brain generates electric currents which fluctuate in accordance with the variations of your thought. Normally your thoughts go to

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activate a muscle so that a limb may be raised or lowered, or you may be thinking of a certain subject at a distance, whatever way it is, your mental energy is broadcast—that is, the energy-force from your brain is emitted indiscriminately in all and every direction. If there was some method whereby you could focus your thought, then it would be of a very much greater intensity in the direction in which it was focused.”

I looked at him, and I remembered a little experiment which he had shown me some time before; we had been in much the same position as now, that is high up on The Peak (as we Tibetans call the Potala). The Lama, my Guide, had in the darkness of the night lighted a small candle and the light glimmered faintly around. But then he had put a magnifying glass in front of the candle, and by adjusting the distance of the magnifying glass from the flame he had been able to project upon the wall a much brighter image of the candle flame. To increase the lesson, he had put a shiny surface behind the candle, and that, in turn, had concentrated the light more so that the image upon the wall was even greater. I mentioned this to him, and he said, “Yes! That is perfectly correct, by various tricks it is possible to focus the thought and to send it in a certain predetermined direction. Actually, every person has what we might term an individual wavelength, that is, the amount of energy on the basic wave emitted from the brain of any one person follows a precise order of oscillation, and if we could determine the rate of oscillation of the basic brain wave of another person and tune in to that basic oscillation, we should have no difficulty whatever in conveying our message by so-called telepathy, irrespective of the distance.” He gazed firmly at me, and added, “You must get it quite clear in your mind, Lobsang, that distance means nothing whatever when it comes to telepathy, telepathy can span oceans, it can even span worlds!”

I confess that I was most anxious to do more in the realm of telepathy. I could visualize myself talking to those of my fellows who were at other lama-series, such as Sera, or even in far-off districts. It seemed to me, though, that all my efforts had to be devoted to things which would help me in the future, a future which, according to all prophecies, would be a gloomy affair indeed.

My Guide interrupted my thoughts again, “We will go into this matter of telepathy later. We will also go into the matter of clairvoyance, for you will have abnormal powers of clairvoyance, and it will ease things for you if you are aware of the mechanics of the process. It all revolves around brain waves and interrupting the Akashic Record, but night is upon us, we must cease our discussion for the moment and prepare for sleep that we may during the night hours be refreshed in time for the first service.”

He rose to his feet, and I rose to mine. I bowed to him in the attitude of

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respect, and I wished that I could show more adequately the profound respect which I felt for this great man who had so befriended me.

Briefly, a fleeting smile crossed his lips, and he stepped forward and I felt his warm handclasp upon my shoulder. A gentle pat, and he said, "Good night, Lobsang, we must not delay any longer, or we shall be logheads again, unable to awaken when it is time for us to attend to our devotions."

In my own room I stood for some moments by the window with the cold night air blowing in. I gazed out upon the lights of Lhasa, and reflected upon all that had been told to me, and upon all that I had yet to learn. It was obvious to me that the more I learned, the more there was to learn, and I wondered where it would all end. With a sigh, perhaps of despair, I rolled myself more tightly in my robe and lay down upon the cold floor to sleep.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

A cold, cold wind was blowing down off the mountains. Dust and small stones whipped through the air and most of them seemed to aim directly for our shrinking bodies. Wise old animals stood with bowed head to wind that their fur should not be disturbed and cause them to lose body heat. We rounded the corner from the Kundu Ling and turned into the Mani Lhakhang. A sudden blast of air, even fiercer than the others, swept under the robes of one of my companions, and with a howl of fright he was blown up into the air like a kite. We looked up, awestruck, with our mouths open. He appeared to be flying to the City, arms outstretched, robes billowing and making him into giant size. Then there came a lull, and he dropped like a stone into the Kaling Chu! We rushed madly to the scene, fearing he would drown. As we reached the bank he—Yulgye—seemed to be standing knee deep in the water. The gale shrieked with renewed force, swirling Yulgye around and sweeping him backwards to our arms. Wonder of wonders, he was hardly wet, except from the knees down. We hastened away, holding our robes tightly to us lest we too be blown into the air.

Along the Mani Lhakhang we marched. And an easy march it was! The howling gale blew us along; our only effort was to maintain a vertical position! In the Village of Sho a party of high ranking ladies were seeking shelter; I always liked to guess at the identity of the person behind the leather face mask. The “younger” the face painted on the leather, the older the woman who wore it. Tibet is a cruel and harsh country, with screaming winds blowing torrents of stones and sand from the mountains. Men and women often wore masks made of leather as protection from the storms. These masks, with slits for eyes and another slit through which one breathed, were invariably painted with a representation of the wearer’s opinion of herself!

“Let’s go by The Street of Shops!” yelled Timon, striving to make himself

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heard above the gale.

“Waste of time,” screamed Yulgye, “they put up the shutters when there is a gale like this. All their stock would be blown away otherwise.”

We hurried on, going at more than twice our normal pace. Crossing by the Turquoise Bridge we had to hold on to each other, the force of the wind was so great. Looking back, we saw that the Potala and Iron Mountain were obscured by a black sullen cloud. A cloud composed of dust particles and small stones worn and torn from the eternal Himalayas. Hurrying on, knowing that the black cloud would overtake us if we were laggardly, we passed the House of Doring just outside the Inner Circle around the immense Jo Kang. With a roar the storm was upon us, beating at our unprotected heads and faces. Timon instinctively raised his hands to protect his eyes. The wind gripped his robe and raised it high over his head, leaving him as bare as a peeled banana, just before the Cathedral of Lhasa.

Stones and twigs came bowling down the street towards us bruising our legs and, at times, drawing blood. The sky became blacker, as dark as night. Hustling Timon before us, struggling with the flapping robe which swirled around his head, we staggered into the Sanctuary of the Holy Place. Inside was peace, profound peace, soothing peace. Here, for some thirteen hundred years, had come the devout to worship. Even the fabric of the building exuded sanctity.

The stone floor was ribbed and grooved by the passage of generation after generation of pilgrims. The air felt alive; so much incense had been burned here throughout the ages that it seemed to have endowed the place with a sentient life of its own.

Age-blackened pillars and beams loomed through the perpetual dusk. The dull glitter of gold, reflecting the light of the gloom. The little flickering flames turned the shadows of the Sacred Figures into a grotesque dance on the Temple walls. God cavorted with Goddess in a never ending play of light and shadow as the endless procession of devout pilgrims moved past the lamps.

Pinpoints of light of all colours shot forth from the great heaps of jewels. Diamonds, topaz, beryl, rubies and jade flashed forth the light of their nature, forming an ever-changing pattern, a kaleidoscope of colour. Great openwork iron nets with links just too small to permit the passage of a hand, guarded the gems and gold from those whose cupidity overcame their rectitude. Here and there, in the brilliant dusk behind the iron curtain, pails of red eyes gleamed, proof that the Temple cats were ever on the alert. Incorruptible, unbribeable without fear of Man or beast they padded silently on velvet paws. But those soft

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feet held sheathed claws of razor-sharpness should their ire be aroused. Of surpassing intelligence, they had but to look at one to know one's intentions. A suspicious move toward the jewels they guarded, and they would become devils incarnate; working in pairs one would flash at the throat of the would-be thief while the other would cling to his right arm. Only death would loose their grip unless the attending monks came quickly! To me, or to others like me who loved them, the cats would roll and purr, and permit us to play with the priceless gems. Play, but not to take away. All black, with vivid blue eyes which glowed a blood red by reflected light, they were known in other countries as "Siamese" cats. Here, in cold Tibet, they were all black. In the tropics, I was told, they were all white.

We wandered around, paying our respects to the Golden Images. Outside, the storm roared and fumed, blowing away all objects which were unsecured and making hazardous the passage of unwary travelers forced by urgent business to be upon the windswept roads. Here, though, in the Temple, all was quiet save for the muted "shush-shush" of many feet as pilgrims did their circuits, and the incessant "clack-chack" of the ever-turning Prayer Wheels.

But we did not hear them. Day after day, night after night, the Wheels went round and round with their "clack-chack, clack-chack, clack-chack" until they had become a part of our existence; we heard them no more than we heard our heartbeats or our breath.

But there was another sound; a harsh, rasping purr-purr and the chink of the metal curtain as an old Tom butted his head against it to remind me that he and I were old friends. Idly I pushed my fingers through the links and scratched his head. Gently he "bit" my fingers in greeting, and then with his rough old tongue nearly scraped the skin off with the fervor of his licking! A suspicious movement further down the Temple and he was off like a flash in order to protect "his" property.

"Wish we'd looked at the Shops!" whispered Timon.

"Stupid!" whispered Yulgye, "you know they are shut during the storms."

"Be quiet you boys!" said a fierce Proctor, stepping out of the shadows and aiming a blow which caught poor Timon off balance, and sent him sprawling to the floor. A nearby monk looked disapprovingly at the scene, and twirled his Prayer Wheel furiously.

The great Proctor, almost seven feet tall, stood over us like a human mountain and hissed, "If you boys make another squeak . . . I'll tear you apart with my hands and toss the pieces to the dogs outside. Now, be quiet!" With a last

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scowl in our direction, he turned and vanished into the shadows. Carefully, afraid of even the rustle of his robes, Timon rose to his feet. We slipped off our sandals and tiptoed to the door. Outside the storm was still raging; from the mountain pinnacles pennants of dazzlingly white snow streamed out. From lower reaches, from the Potala and Chakpori black streams of dust and stones flowed. Along the Sacred Way great columns of dust raced into the City. The wind howled and screeched as if even the devils had gone crazy and were playing a mad cacophony without sense or reason.

Holding on to each other, we crept southwards round the Jo Kang, seeking the shelter of an alcove at the back of the Council Hall. The torrent of turbulent air threatened to lift us from our feet and blow us over the wall into the Tsang Kung Nunnery. We shivered at the mere thought, and pressed on to shelter. Our objective attained, we leaned back, our breath coming in great sobs from the efforts we had made.

“* * * *”, said Timon, “I wish I could put a spell on that * * * * Proctor! Your Honourable Guide could do it, Lobsang. Perhaps you could persuade him to turn that * * * * into a pig,” he added hopefully.

I shook my head, “I am sure he would not,” I replied, “for the Lama Mingyar Dondup never does ill to man or beast. Still, it would be nice to have the Proctor turn into something else. He was a bully!”

The storm was abating. Less shrill was the keening of the wind around the eaves. Pebbles previously wind-borne dropped to the roads and clattered against roof tops. Nor did the dust penetrate our robes so much. Tibet is a high and exposed country. Winds piled up behind the mountain ranges and rushed in a fury through the passes, frequently flinging travelers to their deaths in the ravines. Gusts of wind roared through lamasery corridors, sweeping them clean, blowing away dust and litter before emerging to scream through the valley, and on to the open stretches beyond.

The clamor and the tumult died. The last of the storm clouds raced across the sky leaving the vast vault of Heaven purple and pure. The harsh glare of the sun beat upon us, dazzling us with its brilliance after the murk and gloom of the storm. With grating creaks doors were cautiously opened; heads appeared and the damage of the day assessed. Poor old Mrs. Raks, near whose house we stood, had her front windows blown in and her rear windows blown out. In Tibet windows are of thick oiled paper, oiled so that one may, at some strain to the sight, see out. Glass is rare indeed in Lhasa, paper made from the plentiful willow and rushes is cheap. We set out for home—Chakpori—stopping whenever any item of interest attracted our gaze.

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“Lobsang!” said Timon, “say, the shops will be open now. Come on, it won’t take long!” So saying, he turned off to the right at a much faster pace. Yulgye and I followed with just the merest show of reluctance. Arrived at The Street of Shops we looked eagerly about us. What wonders there were! The all-pervading smell of tea, many types of incense from India and China. Jewellery, and things from far off Germany which were so strange to us as to have no meaning. Further along we came to a shop where sweets were sold, sticky things on sticks, cakes covered with white sugar or coloured icing. We looked and longed; as poor chelas we had no money and so could buy nothing, but to look was free.

Yulgye nudged my arm and whispered, “Lobsang, that big fellow, isn’t that Tzu who used to look after you?” I turned and stared in the direction where he pointed. Yes! It was Tzu all right, Tzu who had taught me so much and had been so very harsh with me. Instinctively I stepped forward and smiled up at him. “Tzu!” I said, “I am... .” He scowled at me and snarled, “Get away, you boys, don’t pester an honest citizen about his Master’s business. You can’t beg from me.” He turned abruptly and strode away.

I felt my eyes grow hot and feared that I was going to disgrace myself in front of my friends. No, I could not afford the luxury of tears, but Tzu had ignored me, pretended not to know me. Tzu, who had taught me from birth. I thought how he had tried to teach me to ride my pony Nakkim, how he had taught me to wrestle. Now he had repudiated me—spurned me. I hung my head and disconsolately scratched the dust with my foot. By me, my two companions stood silent, awkward, feeling as I felt, finding that they too had been slighted. A sudden movement attracted my attention; an elderly bearded Indian, wearing a turban, walked slowly toward me.

“Young sir!” he said in his queerly accented Tibetan, “I saw all, but think not ill of that man. Some of us have forgotten our childhood. I have not: Come with me.” He led the way to the shop at which we had so recently gazed. “Let these young men take their pick,” he said to the shopkeeper. Shyly each of us took one of those gorgeous sticky things and bowed gratefully to the Indian. “No! No!” he exclaimed, “one is not enough, take another each.” We did so, and he paid the smiling shopkeeper.

“Sir!” I said fervently, “may the Blessing of Buddha be with you and protect you; may your joys be many!” He smiled benignly upon us, bowed slightly, and turned away to continue his business.

Slowly we made our way home, slowly eating our sweets in order to make them last as long as possible. We had almost forgotten what such things tasted like. These tasted better than most because they had been given with such

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good feeling. I reflected, as we walked along, that first my Father had ignored me upon the steps of the Potala, and now Tzu had ignored me. Yulgye broke the silence; "It's a funny world, Lobsang, now we are boys we are ignored and snubbed. When we are lamas the Blackheads will come running for our favor!" In Tibet, the laity are referred to as "Blackheads" because they have hair on their heads; monks, of course, have shaven heads.

That evening at the Service I was very attentive; I determined to work hard so that I should become a lama as soon as possible, then I would stride among those "Blackheads" and spurn them when they sought my services. I was indeed so attentive that I attracted the attention of a Proctor. He regarded me with high suspicion, thinking such devotion from me was wholly unnatural! As soon as the Service ended I hurried away to my quarters as I knew I would have a busy day with the Lama Mingyar Dondup on the morrow. For some time I could not sleep. I tossed and turned and thought of the past and of the hardships I had undergone.

In the morning I arose and had my breakfast and then was about to make my way to the Lamas' Quarters. As I was leaving the room a hulking monk in a tattered robe grabbed me.

"Hey, you!" he said, "you work in the kitchen this morning, cleaning millstones too!"

"But Sir!" I replied, "my Guide the Lama Mingyar Dondup wants me." I attempted to squeeze past.

"No, you come with me. Doesn't matter who wants you, I say you are going to work in the kitchen." He grabbed my arm and twisted it so that I could not escape. Reluctantly I went with him, there was no choice.

In Tibet we all took our turn at manual, at menial tasks. "Teaches humility!" said one. "Prevents a boy from getting above himself!" said another. "Knocks out class distinctions!" said a third. Boys—and monks—work at any task assigned purely as discipline. Of course, there was a domestic staff of lower-grade monks, but boys and monks of all grades had to take turns at the lowest and most unpleasant tasks as training. We all hated it as the "regulars"—inferior men all—treated us as slaves, well knowing that we could not possibly complain. Complain? It was meant to be hard!

Down the stone corridor we went. Down the steps made of two wooden uprights with bars fixed across. Into the great kitchens where I had been so badly burned on the leg. "There!" said the monk who was holding me, "get up and clean out the grooves in the stones." Picking up a sharp metal spike, I climbed on to one of the great barley-grinding wheels and industriously dug

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into the crushed debris lodged in the grooves. This stone had been neglected, and now, instead of grinding, it had just spoiled the barley. My task was to “dress” the surface so that it was again sharp and clean. The monk stood by, idly picking his teeth.

“Hey!” yelled a voice from the entrance, “Tuesday Lobsang Rampa. Is Tuesday Lobsang Rampa here? The Honourable Lama Mingyar Dondup wants him immediately.” Instinctively I stood up and jumped off the stone.

“Here I am!” I called. The monk brought his balled fist down hard on the top of my head, knocking me to the ground. “I say you will stay here and do your work,” he growled. “If anyone wants you, let him come in person.”

Catching me by the neck, he lifted me and flung me on to the stone. My head struck a corner, and all the stars in the heavens flamed into my consciousness before fading and leaving the world blank and dark.

Strangely, I had a sensation of being lifted—lifted horizontally—and then stood on my feet. Somewhere a great deep-toiled gong seemed to be tolling out the seconds of life, it went “bong-bongbong” and with a final stroke I felt that I had been struck by blue lightning. On the instant the world grew very bright, bright with a kind of yellowish light, a light in which I could see more clearly than normal.

“Ooo,” I said to myself, “so I am outside of my body! Oh! I do look strange!”

I had had considerable experience of astral travelling, I had traveled far beyond the confines of this old earth of ours, and I had traveled also to many of the greatest cities upon this globe. Now, though, I had my first experience of being “jumped out of my body”. I stood beside the great millstone looking down with considerable distaste at the scruffy little figure in the very tattered robe lying on the stone. I gazed down, and it was only a matter of passing interest to observe how my astral body was joined to that battered figure by a bluish white cord which undulated and pulsed, which glowed brightly and faded, and glowed and faded again. Then I gazed more closely at my body upon this stone slab, and was appalled at the great gash over the left temple from whence oozed dark red blood, blood which seeped down into the stone grooves and mixed inextricably with the debris which so far had not been dug out.

A sudden commotion attracted my attention, and as I turned I saw my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, entering the kitchen, his face white with anger. He strode forward and came to a halt right before the head monk of the kitchen—the monk who had treated me so badly. No word was spoken, no word at all, in fact there was a hushed and deathly silence. My Guide’s pierc-

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ing eyes seemed to strike lightning into the kitchen monk, with a sigh like a punctured balloon he subsided into an inert mass on the stone floor. Without sparing a second glance at him my Guide turned away, turned to my earthly figure stretched out, breathing stertorously upon that stone circle.

I looked about me, I was really fascinated to think that I was now able to get out of my body for short distances. Going "far travels" in the astral was nothing, I always had been able to do that, but this sensation of getting out of myself and looking down upon my earthly suit of clay was a new, intriguing experience.

Ignoring the happenings about me for a moment, I let myself drift, drift up through the ceiling of the kitchen. "Ow!" I said involuntarily as I passed through the stone ceiling into the room above. Here were seated a group of lamas in deep contemplation. I saw with some interest that they had a sort of model of the world before them. It was a round ball upon which were indicated continents and lands and oceans and seas, and the round ball was fixed at an angle, the angle corresponding to the tilt of the earth itself in space. I did not tarry there, this seemed to me to be too much like lesson work, I journeyed upwards.

Through another ceiling, through another, and yet another, and then I stood in the Room of the Tombs! About me were the great golden walls which supported the tombs of the Incarnations of the Dalai Lama for centuries past. I stood here in reverent contemplation for some moments, and then allowed myself to drift upwards, upwards, so that at last below me I saw that glorious Potala with all its gleaming gold, with all its scarlet and crimson and with the wondrous white walls which seemed to melt into the living rock of the mountain itself.

Turning my gaze slightly to the right I could see the Village of Sho and beyond that the City of Lhasa with the blue mountains in the background. As I rose I could see the limitless spaces of our fair and pleasant land, a land which could be hard and cruel through the vagaries of unpredictable weather but which, to me, was home!

A remarkably severe tugging attracted my attention and I found myself being reeled in as I often reeled in a kite which was soaring in the sky. I sank down and down, down into the Potala, through floors which became ceilings, and through floors again, until at last I reached my destination and stood again beside my body in the kitchen.

The Lama Mingyar Dondup was gently bathing my left temple, picking pieces from it. "Good gracious!" I said to myself in profound astonishment, "is

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my head so thick that it cracked or chipped the stone?" Then I saw that I had a small fracture, I saw also a lot of the material being pulled from my head was debris—rubbish—the chippings of stone and the remnants of ground barley. I watched with interest, and, I confess, some amusement, for here standing beside my body in my astral body I felt no pain, no discomfort, only peace.

At last the Lama Mingyar Dondup finished his ministrations and he put a patch, a herbal compress, upon my head and bound it about with silken bonds. Then, motioning to two monks who stood by with a litter, he instructed them to lift me so carefully.

The men, monks of my own Order, gently lifted me and placed me upon that litter with the Lama Mingyar Dondup walking beside. I was carried off. I looked about me in considerable astonishment; the light was fading, had I been so long that the day was dying? Before I had an answer to that I found that I too was fading, the yellow and the blue of the spiritual light was diminishing in intensity, and I felt an absolutely overwhelming, absolutely overpowering urge to rest, to sleep and not to bother about anything.

I knew no more for a time and then, through my head shot excruciating pains, pains which caused me to see reds and blues and greens and yellows, pains which made me think that I should go mad with the intense agony. A cool hand was placed upon me and a gentle voice said, "It is all right, Lobsang. It is all right, rest, rest, go to sleep!" The world seemed to become a dark fluffy pillow, the pillow was soft as swansdown into which I sank gratefully, peacefully, and the pillow seemed to envelop me so that I knew no more, and again my soul soared in space, while upon the earth my battered body remained at rest.

It must have been many hours later when I again regained consciousness. I awakened to find my Guide sitting beside me, holding my hands in his. As my eyelids fluttered upwards and the light of the evening streamed in, I smiled weakly, and he smiled back at me then, disengaging his hands, he took from a little table beside him a cup with some sweet smelling brew. Gently pressing it to my lips he said, "Drink this up, it will do you good!" I drank, and life flooded through me once again, so much so that I tried to sit up. The effort was too much; I felt as if a great club had been bashed down once more upon my head, I saw vivid lights, constellations of lights, and I soon desisted in my efforts.

The evening shadows lengthened. From below me came the muted sound of the conches, and I knew that the Service was about to start. My Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, said, "I have to go for half an hour, Lobsang, because the Inmost One wants me, but your friends Timon and Yulgye are here to look

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after you in my absence and to call me should the occasion arise." He squeeze my hands, rose to his feet, and left the room.

Two familiar faces appeared, half frightened and wholly excited. They squatted down beside me, and Timon said, "Oh, Lobsang! Did the Kitchen Master get a telling off about all this!"

"Yes," said the other, "and he is being turned out of the Lamasery for extreme, unnecessary brutality. He is being escorted out now!"

They were bubbling with excitement and then Timon said again, "I thought you were dead, Lobsang, you really did bleed like a stuffed yak!" I really had to smile as I looked at them, their voices showed how thrilled they were at any excitement to relieve the drab monotony of life in a lamasery.

I held no grudge against them for their excitement, knowing that I too would have been excited if the victim had been other than I. I smiled upon them and was then overpowered by an oppressive tiredness. I closed my eyes, intending to rest them for a few moments, and once again I knew no more.

For several days, perhaps seven or eight in all, I rested upon my back and my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, acted as my nurse. But for him I should not have survived, for life in a lamasery is not necessarily gentle or kind, it is indeed survival of the fittest. The Lama was a kind man, a loving man, but even had he been otherwise there would have been the greatest reasons for keeping me alive. I, as I have said before, had a special task to do in life, and I supposed that the hardships which I was undergoing as a boy were meant in some way to toughen me, to make me become immured to hardship and suffering, for all the prophecies that I had heard—and I had heard quite a few!—had indicated that my life would be a life of sorrow, a life of suffering.

But it was not all suffering. As my condition improved there were more opportunities for talk with my Guide. We talked of many things, we covered common subjects and we covered subjects which were most uncommon. We dealt at length with various occult subjects. I remember on one occasion saying, "It must be a wonderful thing, Honorable Lama, to be a librarian and so possess all the knowledge in the world. I would be a librarian were it not for all these terrible prophecies as to my future." My Guide smiled down upon me. "The Chinese have a saying, 'a picture is worth a thousand words,' Lobsang, but I say that no amount of reading or looking at pictures will replace practical experience and knowledge." I looked at him to see if he were serious and then I thought of the Japanese monk, Kenji Tekeuchi, who for almost seventy years had studied the printed word and had failed to practice or to absorb anything that he had read.

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My Guide read my thoughts “Yes!” he said, “the old man is not mental. He gave himself mental indigestion by reading everything and anything and not absorbing any of it. He imagines that he is a great man, a man of surpassing spirituality. Instead he is a poor old blunderer who deceives no one so much as himself.” The Lama sighed sadly and said, “He is spiritually bankrupt, knowing all but knowing nothing. The insensate, indiscriminate and ill-advised reading of all that comes one’s way is dangerous. This man followed all the great religions and, understanding none of them, he yet set himself up as the greatest spiritual man of all.”

“Honourable Lama!” I said, “if it be so harmful to have books, why are there books?”

My Guide looked blankly at me for a moment. (“Ha!” I thought, “he does not know the answer to that one!”) Then he smiled again and said, “But my dear Lobsang, the answer is so obvious! Read, read, and read again, but never let any book overpower your discrimination or your discernment. A book is meant to teach, to instruct or even to amuse. A book is not a master to be followed blindly and without reason. No person possessed of intelligence should ever be enslaved by a book or by the words of another.”

I sat back and nodded my head. Yes, that made sense. But then, why bother with books?

“Books, Lobsang?” said my Guide in answer to my query. “Of course there must be books! The libraries of the world contain most of the knowledge of the world, but no one but an idiot would say that mankind is the slave of books. Books exist merely to be a guide unto mankind, to be there for his reference, for his use. It is indeed a fact that books misused can be a curse, for they lead a man to feel that he is greater than he is and thus to lead him to devious paths in life, paths which he has not the knowledge or the wit to follow to the end.”

“Well, Honourable Lama,” I asked again, “what are the uses of books?”

My Guide looked hard at me and said, “You cannot go to all the places in the world and study under the greatest Masters of the world, but the printed word—books—can bring their teachings to you. You do not have to believe everything you read, nor do the great masters of writing ever tell you that you should. You should use your own judgement and use their words of wisdom as a pointer to what should be your words of wisdom. I can assure you that a person who is not ready to study a subject can harm himself immeasurably by getting hold of a book and, as it were, trying to raise himself above his karmic station by studying the words and the works of others. It may well be that the

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reader is a man of low evolutionary development, and in that case, in studying the things which at the present are not for him, he may stunt rather than enhance his spiritual development. I have known many such cases and our Japanese friend is just one."

My Guide rang for tea, a most necessary adjunct to all our discussions! When tea had been brought by the monk-servant, we again resumed our discussion. My Guide said, "Lobsang! You are going to have a most unusual life and to that end your development is being forced, your telepathic powers are being increased by any method at our disposal. I am going to tell you now that in just a few months you are going to study by telepathy, allied to clairvoyance, some of the greatest books of the world, some of the literary masterpieces of the world, and you are going to study them irrespective of lack of knowledge of the language in which they are written."

I am afraid that I gaped at him in real astonishment. How could I study a book written in a language which I did not know? That was a matter which puzzled me, but I soon received an answer.

"When your powers of telepathy and clairvoyance are a little more acute—as they will be—you will be able to pick up the whole thoughts of a book from people who have just recently read the book or are at present engaged upon such reading. This is one of the lesser known uses of telepathy which, of course, must in such cases be allied to clairvoyance. People in other parts of the world cannot always get to a public library or to one of the leading library centres of a country. They may pass the door but unless they can prove that they are a genuine student in search of knowledge, they are not admitted. Such a bar will not be placed on you, you will be able to travel in the astral and study and that will help you all the days of your life, and to the time when you pass beyond this life."

He told me of the uses of occultism. Misuse of occult power or the domination of another person by occult means brought a truly terrible punishment. Esoteric powers, metaphysical powers, and extrasensory perceptions were to be used only for good, only in the service of others, only to increase the sum total of knowledge contained in the world.

"But, Honourable Lama!" I said, urgently, "how about people who get out of their bodies with excitement or with interest, how about when they fall out of their bodies and then nearly die of fright, can nothing be done to warn them?"

My Guide smiled rather sadly at this as he said, "It is true, Lobsang, that many, many people read books and try experiments without having a suitable

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Master at hand. Many people get out of themselves, either through drink or through overexcitement or through overindulgence in something which is not good for the spirit, and then they panic. There is one way in which you can help. Throughout your life you should warn those who enquire that the only thing to fear in occult matters is fear. Fear allows undesirable thoughts, undesirable entities to enter and even to take control of one, to take possession of one, and you, Lobsang, should repeat again and again that there is naught ever to fear other than fear itself. In casting out fear, then you strengthen humanity and make humanity purer. It is fear which causes wars, fear which makes dissension in the world, fear which turns man's hand against man. Fear, and fear alone, is the enemy, and if we throw out fear once and for all then, believe me, there is nothing more that need be feared."

Fear, what was all this talk about fear? I looked up at my Guide, and I suppose he saw the unspoken question in my eyes. Perhaps instead he read my thoughts telepathically; whatever it was he suddenly said, "So you are wondering about fear? Well, you are young and innocent!" I thought to myself, "Oh! Not so innocent as he thinks!"

The Lama smiled as if he enjoyed that private joke with me—although of course I had not uttered a word—and then he said, "Fear is a very real thing, a tangible thing, you will have heard tales of those who are addicted to spirits, who become intoxicated. They are men who see remarkable creatures. Some of these drunkards claim to see green elephants with pink stripes, or even more bizarre creatures. I tell you, Lobsang, that the creatures which they see—so-called figments of their imagination—are real creatures indeed."

I was still not clear about this matter of fear. Of course I knew what fear was in the physical sense. I thought of the time when I had had to stay motionless outside the Chakpori Lamasery so that I could undergo the test of endurance before being permitted to enter and be accepted as the humblest of humble chelas.

I turned to my Guide and said, "Honourable Lama, what is all this fear? In conversation I have heard of the creatures of the lower astral, yet I myself in all my astral travels have never encountered aught which caused me even a moment's fear. What is all this fear?"

My Guide sat still for a moment, then, as if reaching a sudden decision, he rose swiftly to his feet and said, "Come!" I rose also and we went along a stone corridor and turned to the right and to the left and to the right again. Continuing our journey we at last turned into a room where there was no light. It was like stepping into a pool of blackness. My Guide went first and lit a butter lamp which was standing ready beside the door, then, motioning to me to

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lie down, he said, "You are old enough to experience the entities of the lower astral. I am prepared to assist you to see these creatures and to make sure that you come to no harm, for they should not be encountered unless one is adequately prepared and protected. I will extinguish this light, and do you rest in peace and let yourself drift away from your body—let yourself drift whither you will, regardless of destination, regardless of intention—just drift and wander as the breeze."

So saying, he extinguished the lamp and there was no glimmer of light in that place when he had shut the door. I could not even detect his breathing but I could feel his warm, comforting presence near me. Astral travelling was no new experience to me. I was born with the ability to travel thus and to remember always, everything. Now, stretched upon the ground, with my head resting upon part of my rolled-up robe, I folded my hands and put my feet together and dwelt upon the process of leaving the body, the process which is so simple to those who know. Soon I felt the gentle jerk which indicates a separation of the astral vehicle from the physical, and with that jerk there came a flooding of light. I seemed to be floating at the end of my Silver Cord. Beneath me was utter blackness, the blackness of the room which I had just left, and in which there was no glimmer of light. I looked about me, but this was in no way different from the normal travels that I had undertaken before. I thought of elevating myself above the Iron Mountain, and with the thought I was no longer in that room but hovering above the Mountain, hovering two perhaps three hundred feet. Suddenly I was no longer aware of the Potala, no longer aware of the Iron Mountain, no longer aware of the land of Tibet or of the Valley of Lhasa. I felt sick with apprehension. My Silver Cord trembled violently and I was appalled to see that some of the "silver-blue" haze which always emanated from the Cord had turned into a sickly yellow-green. Without warning there was a terrible twitching, a terrible tugging, a sensation as if insane fiends were trying to reel me in. Instinctively I looked down and nearly fainted away at what I saw.

About me, rather, below me, were the strangest and most hideous creatures such as were seen by drunks. The most horrible thing I had ever seen in my life came undulating toward me; it looked like an immense slug with an ugly human face but of such colours as no human ever wore.

The face was red but the nose and ears were green, and the eyes seemed to revolve within their sockets. There were other creatures too, each seemed to be more horrible and more nauseating than the one before. I saw creatures which no words could describe yet they all seemed to have a common human trait of cruelty about them. They reached, they tried to pluck at me, they tried to tear me away from my Cord. Others reached down and tried to separate the

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Cord by pulling at it. I looked, and shuddered, and then I thought, "Fear! So this is fear! Well, these things cannot hurt me. I am immune from their manifestations, I am immune from their attacks!" And as I thought thus, the entities disappeared and were no more. The ethereal Cord joining me to my physical body brightened and reverted to its normal colours; I felt exhilarated, free, and I knew that in undergoing and surmounting this test I should not again be afraid of anything which could happen in the astral. It taught me conclusively that the things of what we are afraid cannot hurt us unless we permit them to hurt us through our fear.

A sudden tugging at my Silver Cord attracted my attention again and I looked down without the slightest hesitation, without the slightest sensation or feeling of fear. I saw a little glimmer of light, I saw that my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, had lighted that little flickering butter lamp, and my body was drawing down my astral body.

Gently I floated down through the roof of the Chakpori, floated down so that I was horizontal above my physical body, then, gently so very gently, I drifted down and the astral and the physical merged and were as one. The body which was now "I" twitched slightly, and I sat up.

My Guide looked down at me with a loving smile upon his face. "Well done, Lobsang!" he said. "To let you in to a very very great secret, you did better on your first attempt than I did on mine. I am proud of you!"

I was still quite puzzled about this fear business, so I said, "Honourable Lama, what is there to be afraid of really?"

My Guide looked quite serious, even somber, as he said, "You have led a good life, Lobsang, and have nothing to fear, therefore you do not fear. But there are those who have committed crimes, who have done wrongs against others, and when they are alone, their conscience troubles them sorely. The creatures of the lower astral feed on fear, they are nourished by those of troubled conscience. People make thought forms of evil. Perhaps at some time in the future you will be able to go into an old old cathedral or temple that has stood for countless years. From the walls of that building (such as our own Jo Kang) you will sense the good that has occurred within that building. But then if you can suddenly go to an old old prison where much suffering, much persecution has taken place, then you will have indeed the opposite effect. It follows from this that the inhabitants of buildings make thought forms which inhabit the walls of the buildings, wherefore it is apparent that a good building has good thought forms which give out good emanations, and places of evil have evil thoughts within them, wherefore it is again clear that only evil thoughts can come from an evil building, and those thoughts and thought forms can be

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seen and touched by those who are clairvoyant while in the astral state.”

My Guide thought for a moment, and then said, “There are cases, as you will be aware, when monks and others imagine that they are greater than their own reality, they build a thought form and in time the thought form colours their whole outlook. There is a case which I recall at this moment where an old Burmese monk—a remarkably ignorant man too, I have to say—he was a lowly monk, a monk of no understanding, yet because he was our brother, and of our Order, we had to make every allowance. This monk lived a solitary life as do so many of us, but instead of devoting his time to meditation and contemplation and other things of good, he imagined, instead, that he was a mighty man in the land of Burma. He imagined that he was not a lowly monk who had hardly set foot upon the Path of Enlightenment. Instead, in the solitude of his cell, he imagined that he was a great Prince, a Prince of mighty estates and great wealth. At the start it was harmless, it was a harmless if useless diversion. Certainly no one would have condemned him for a few idle imaginings and yearnings, for, as I say, he had neither the wit nor the learning to really devote himself to the spiritual tasks at hand. This man throughout the years, whenever he was alone, became the great great Prince. It coloured his outlook, it affected his manner, and with the passage of time the humble monk seemed to disappear and the arrogant Prince came to the fore. At last the poor unfortunate man really believed most firmly that he was a Prince of the land of Burma. He spoke to an Abbot one day as if the Abbot was a serf upon the princely estate. The Abbot was not such a peaceful Abbot as some of us, and I am sorry to say that the shock which the poor monk-turned-princeling sustained put him off balance, and reduced him to a state of mental instability. But you, Lobsang, have no need to worry about such things; you are stable and well balanced and without fear. Remember only these words by way of warning: Fear corrodes the soul. Vain and useless imaginings put one on the wrong path so that with the passage of years the imaginings become reality, and the realities fade from sight and do not come to light again for several incarnations. Keep your foot upon the Path, let no wild yearnings or imaginings colour or distort your outlook. This is the World of Illusion, but to those of us who can face that knowledge, then the illusion can be turned into reality when we are off this world.”

I thought of all that, and I must confess that I had already heard of that monk-turned-mental-prince, because I had read about it in some book in the Lamas’ Library.

“Honourable Guide!” I said, “what are the uses of occult power, then?”

The Lama folded his hands and looked straight at me. “The uses of occult knowledge? Well, that is easy enough, Lobsang! We are entitled to help

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those who are worthy of help. We are not entitled to help those who do not want our help, and are not yet ready for help. We do not use occult power or ability for self-gain, nor for hire or reward. The whole purpose of occult power is to speed one's development upwards, to speed one's evolution and to help the world as a whole, not just the world of humans, but the world of nature, of animals—everything.”

We were again interrupted by the Service starting in the Temple building near us and, as it would have been disrespectful to the Gods to continue a discussion while they were being worshipped, we ended our talk and sat in silence by the flickering flame of the butter lamp, now burning low.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

It was pleasant indeed lying in the cool, long grass at the base of the Pargo Kaling. Above me, at my back, the ancient stones soared heavenwards and, from my viewpoint flat on the ground, the point so high above seemed to scrape the clouds. Appropriately enough, the “Bud of the Lotus” forming the point symbolized Spirit, while the “leaves” which supported the “Bud” represented Air. I, at the base, rested comfortably against the representation of “Life on Earth”. Just beyond my reach—unless I stood—were the “Steps of Attainment”. Well, I was trying to “attain” now!

It was pleasant lying here and watching the traders from India, China and Burma come trudging by. Some of them were afoot while leading long trains of animals carrying exotic goods from far far places. Others, more grand maybe, or possibly just plain tired, rode and gazed about.

I speculated idly on what their pannier bags contained, then pulled myself together with a jerk; that was why I was here! I was here to watch the aura of as many different people as I could. I was here to “divine” from the aura and from telepathy what these men were doing, what they were thinking, and what were their intentions.

Just off to the opposite side of the road a poor blind beggar sat. He was covered with dirt. Ragged and commonplace he sat and whined at passing travelers. A surprising number threw coins to him, delighting in watching him, blind, scramble for the falling coins and finally locating them by the sound they made as they struck the earth and perhaps chinked against a stone. Occasionally, very occasionally indeed, he would miss a small coin, and the traveler would lift it and drop it again. Thinking of him, I turned my lazy head in his direction and sat upright in sheer dazed astonishment. His aura! I had never bothered to observe it before. Now, looking carefully, I saw that he was not

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blind, I saw that he was rich, had money and goods stored away and that he was pretending to be a poor blind beggar as it was the easiest way of making a living that he knew. No! It could not be, I was mistaken, I was overconfident or something. Perhaps my powers were failing. Troubled at such a thought, I stumbled to my reluctant feet and went in search of enlightenment from my Guide the Lama Mingyar Dondup who was at the Kundu Ling opposite.

Some weeks before I had undergone an operation in order that my "Third Eye" might be the more widely opened. From birth I had been possessed of unusual powers of clairvoyance, with the ability to see the "aura" around the bodies of humans, animals and plants. The painful operation had succeeded in increasing my powers far more than had been anticipated even by the Lama Mingyar Dondup. Now my development was being rushed; my training in all occult matters occupied my waking hours. I felt squeezed by mighty forces as this lama and that lama "pumped" knowledge into me by telepathy and by other strange forces whose workings I was now so intensively studying. Why do classwork when one can be taught by telepathy? Why wonder at a man's intentions when one can see from his aura? But I was wondering about that blind man!

"Ow! Honourable Lama! Where are you?" I cried, running across the road in search of my Guide. Into the little park I stumbled, almost tripping over my own eager feet.

"So!" smiled my Guide, sitting peacefully on a fallen bole, "So! You are excited, you have just discovered that the 'blind' man sees as well as you." I stood panting, panting from lack of breath and from indignation.

"Yes!" I exclaimed, "the man is a fraud, a robber, for he steals from those of good heart. He should be put in prison!" The Lama burst out laughing at my red, indignant face.

"But Lobsang," he said mildly, "why all the commotion? That man is selling service as much as the man who sells prayer-wheels. People give insignificant coins to him that they may be thought generous; it makes them feel good. For a time it increases their rate of molecular vibration, raises their spirituality, places them nearer the Gods. It does them good. The coins they give? Nothing! They do not miss them."

"But he is not blind!" I said in exasperation, "he is a robber."

"Lobsang," said my Guide, "he is harmless, he is selling service. Later, in the Western world, you will find that advertising people will make claims the falsity of which will injure one's health, will deform babies yet unborn, and will transform the passably sane into raving maniacs."

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He patted the fallen tree and motioned for me to sit beside him. I sat and drummed my heels on the bark. "You must practice using the aura and telepathy together," said my Guide. "By using one and not the other your conclusions may be warped, as in this case. It is essential to use all one's faculties, bring all one's powers to bear, on each and every problem. Now, this afternoon I have to go away, and the great Medical Lama, the Reverend Chinrobnobo, of the Menzekang Hospital, will talk to you. And you will talk to him"

"Ow!" I said, ruefully, "but he never speaks to me, never even notices me!"

"All that will be changed, one way or another, this afternoon," said my Guide.

"One way or another!" I thought. That looked very ominous. Together my Guide and I walked back to the Iron Mountain, pausing momentarily to gaze anew at the old yet always fresh rock coloured carvings. Then we ascended the steep and stony path.

"Like Life, this path, Lobsang," said the Lama. "Life follows a hard and stony path, with many traps and pitfalls, yet if one perseveres, the top is attained." As we reached the top of the path the call to Temple Service was made, and we each went our own way, he to his associates, and I to others of my class. As soon as the Service had ended, and I had partaken of food, a chela even smaller than I came somewhat nervously to me.

"Tuesday Lobsang," he said diffidently, "the Holy Medical Lama Chinrobnobo wants to see you immediately in the Medical School."

I straightened my robe, took a few deep breaths that my twanging nerves might be calmed, and walked with assurance that I did not feel over to the Medical School. "Ah!" boomed a great voice, a voice that reminded me of the sound of a deep Temple conch. I stood before him and paid my respects in the time-honoured way. The Lama was a big man, tall, bulky, broad-shouldered, and a wholly awe-inspiring figure for a small boy. I felt that a swipe from one of his mighty hands would knock my head straight off my shoulders and send it tumbling down the mountainside. However, he bade me be seated before him, bade me in such a genial manner that I almost fell into a sitting position!

"Now, boy!" said the great deep voice, like rolling thunder among the distant mountains. "I have heard much of you. Your Illustrious Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup claims that you are a prodigy, that your paranormal abilities are immense. We shall see!" I sat and quaked. "You see me? What do you see?" he asked. I quaked even more as I said the first thing that entered my mind; "I

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see, such a big man, Holy Medical Lama, that I thought it was a mountain when I came here first."

His boisterous laugh caused such a gale of wind that I half feared that it would blow my robe off. "Look at me, boy, look at my aura and tell me what you see!" he commanded. Then, "Tell me what you see of the aura and what it means to you." I looked at him, not directly, not staring, for that often dims the aura of a clothed figure; I looked toward him, but not exactly "at" him.

"Sir!" I said, "I see first the physical outline of your body, dimly as it would be without a robe. Then, very close to you I see a faint bluish light the colour of fresh wood smoke. It tells me that you have been working too hard; that you have had sleepless nights of late and your etheric energy is low." He looked at me with eyes somewhat wider than normal, and nodded in satisfaction.

"Go on!" he said.

"Sir!" I continued, "your aura extends from you a distance of about nine feet on either side. The colours are in layers both vertical and horizontal. You have the yellow of high spirituality. At present you are marveling that one of my age can tell you so much and you are thinking that my Guide the Lama Mingyar Dondup knows something after all. You are thinking that you will have to apologize to him for your expressed doubts as to my capabilities." I was interrupted by a great shout of laughter.

"You are right, boy, you are right!" he said delightedly, "Go on!"

"Sir!" (this was child's play to me!) "You recently had some mishap and sustained a blow over your liver. It hurts when you laugh too hard and you wonder if you should take some tatura herb and have deep massage while under its anaesthetic influence. You are thinking that it is Fate which decided that of more than six thousand herbs, tatura should be in short supply."

He was not laughing now, he was looking at me with undisguised respect. I added, "It is further indicated in your aura, Sir, that in a short time you will be the most important Medical Abbot of Tibet."

He gazed at me with some apprehension. "My boy," he said, "You have great power; you will go far. Never never abuse the power within you. It can be dangerous. Now let us discuss the aura as equals. But let us discuss over tea."

He raised the small silver bell and shook it so violently that I feared it would fly from his hand. Within seconds a young monk hastened in with tea and, oh, joy of joys!, some of the luxuries of Mother India! As we sat there I

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reflected that all these high lamas had comfortable quarters.

Below us I could see the great parks of Lhasa, the Dodpal and the Khati were—so it appeared—within reach of my extended arm. More to the left the Chorten of our area, the Kesar Lhakhang, stood like a sentinel, while across the road, further north, my favourite spot, the Pargo Kaling (Western Gate) towered aloft.

“What causes the aura, Sir?” I asked.

“As your respected Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup has told you,” he commenced, “the brain receives messages from the Overself. Electric currents are generated in the brain. The whole of Life is electric. The aura is a manifestation of electric power. About one’s head, as you so well know, there is a halo or nimbus. Old paintings always show a Saint or God with such a ‘Golden Bowl’ around the back of the head.”

“Why do so few people see the aura and the halo, Sir?” I asked.

“Some people disbelieve the existence of the aura because they can not see it. They forget that they can not see air either, and without air they would not manage very well. Some—a very very few—people see auras. Others do not. Some people can hear higher frequencies, or lower frequencies than others. It has nothing to do with the degree of spirituality of the observer, any more than the ability to walk on stilts indicates a necessarily spiritual person.” He smiled at me and added, “I used to walk on stilts almost as well as you. Now my figure is not suited for it.” I smiled too, thinking that he would need a pair of tree trunks as stilts.

“When we operated upon you for the Opening of the Third Eye,” said the Great Medical Lama, “we were able to observe that portions of your frontal-lobe developments were very different from the average and so we assume that physically you were born to be clairvoyant and telepathic. That is one of the reasons you have received and will receive such intensive and advanced training.” He looked at me with immense satisfaction and continued, “You are going to have to remain here at the Medical School for a few days. We are going to investigate you thoroughly and see how we can even increase your abilities and teach you much.”

There was a discreet cough at the door, and my Guide the Lama Mingyar Dondup walked into the room. I jumped to my feet and bowed to him, as did the Great Chinrobnobo. My Guide was smiling. “I received your telepathic message,” he said to the Great Medical Lama, “so I came to you as speedily as I was able so that perhaps you would give me the pleasure of hearing your confirmation of my findings in the case of my young friend.” He stopped, and

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smiled at me and sat down.

The Great Lama Chinrobnobo also smiled and said, "Respected Colleague! I gladly bow to your superior knowledge in accepting this young man for investigation. Respected Colleague, your own talents are numerous, you are startlingly versatile, but never have you found such a boy as this."

Then, of all things, they both laughed, and the Lama Chinrobnobo reached down somewhere behind him and took out three jars of pickled walnuts! I must have looked stupid for they both turned toward me and started laughing. "Lobsang, you are not using your telepathic ability. If you were you would be aware that the Reverend lama and I were so sinful as to have a bet. It was agreed between us that if you came up to my statements, then the Reverend Medical Lama would give you three jars of pickled walnuts, whereas if you were not up to the standard claimed by me I would do a long journey and undertake certain medical work for my friend."

My Guide smiled at me again and said, "Of course I am going to do the journey for him in any case, and you will be going with me, but we had to get matters straight and now honour is satisfied." He pointed to the three jars and said, "Put them by you, Lobsang, when you leave here, when you leave this room, take them with you for they are the spoils of the victor, and in this case you are the victor."

I really felt remarkably foolish; obviously I could not use telepathic powers on these two High Lamas. The very thought of such a thing sent chill shivers along my spine. I loved my Guide the Lama Mingyar Dondup, and I greatly respected the knowledge and wisdom of the Great Lama Chinrobnobo. It would have been an insult, it would have been bad manners indeed to have eavesdropped even telepathically. The Lama Chinrobnobo turned to me and said, "Yes, my boy, your sentiments do you credit. I am pleased indeed to greet you and to have you here among us. We will help you with your development."

My Guide said, "Now Lobsang, you are going to have to stay in this particular building for, perhaps, a week, because you are going to be taught quite a lot about the aura. Oh yes!" he said, interpreting my glance, "I am aware that you think you know all about the aura. You can see the aura, and you can read the aura, but now you have to learn the whys and wherefores of it and you have to learn how much the other fellow does not see. I am going to leave you now, but I shall see you tomorrow." He rose to his feet and, of course, we rose as well. My Guide made his farewells and then withdrew from that quite comfortable chamber.

The Lama Chinrobnobo turned to me and said, "Do not be so nervous,

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Lobsang, nothing is going to happen to you; we are merely going to try to help you and to expedite your own development. First of all, let us have a little discussion about the human aura. You, of course, see the aura vividly and you can understand about the aura, but imagine that you were not so favoured, not so gifted. Put yourself in the position of ninety nine and nine tenths, or even more, of the world's population." He violently rang that little silver bell again and once again the attendant came bustling in with tea and of course the necessary "other things" which most pleased me when I was having tea! It might be of interest here to say that we in Tibet sometimes drank in excess of sixty cups of tea in a day. Of course, Tibet is a cold country and the hot tea warmed us, we were not able to get out and buy drinks such as people of the Western world had, we were limited to tea and tsampa unless some really kindhearted person brought from a land such as India those things which were not available in Tibet.

We settled down, and the Lama Chinrobnobo said, "We have already discussed the origin of the aura. It is the life force of a human body. I am going to assume for the moment, Lobsang, that you cannot see the aura and that you know nothing about the aura, because only in assuming that can I tell you what the average person sees and does not see." I nodded my head to indicate that I understood.

Of course I had been born with the ability to see the aura and things like that, and those abilities had been increased by the operation of "the Third Eye", and on many occasions in the past I had been almost trapped into saying what I saw without it dawning upon me that others did not see the same as I. I remembered an occasion sometime previously when I had said that a person was still alive—a person that old Tzu and I had seen lying beside the road—and Tzu had said that I was quite wrong, the man was dead. I had said, "But Tzu, the man still has his lights on!" Fortunately, as I realized after, the gale of wind which was blowing past us had distorted my words so that Tzu had not comprehended the meaning. On some impulse, however, he had examined the man lying beside the road and found he was alive! But this is a digression.

"The average man and woman, Lobsang, cannot see the human aura. Some, indeed, hold to the belief that there is no such thing as a human aura. They might just as well say that there is no such thing as air because they cannot see it!" The Medical Lama looked at me to see if I was following him or if my thoughts were straying walnut-wise.

Satisfied with my appearance of attention, he nodded sagely and continued, "So long as there is life in a body, then there is an aura which can be seen by those with the power or gift or ability—call it what you will. I must explain to

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you, Lobsang, that for the clearest perception of the aura the subject who is being seen must be absolutely nude. We will discuss why later. It is sufficient for just ordinary readings to look at a person while they have some clothing on, but if you are going to look for anything whatever connected with a medical reason, then the person must be completely and absolutely nude. Well, completely enveloping the body and extending from the body for a distance of an eighth of an inch to three or four inches is the etheric sheath. This is a blue-grey mist, one can hardly call it a mist, for although it appears misty one can see clearly through it. This etheric covering is the purely animal emanation, it derives particularly from the animal vitality of the body so that a very healthy person will have a quite wide etheric; it may even be three or four inches from the body. Only the most gifted, Lobsang, perceive the next layer, for between the etheric and the aura proper there is another band, perhaps; three inches across, and one has to be gifted and talented indeed to see any colours in that band. I confess that I can see nothing but empty space there.”

I felt really gleeful about that because I could see all the colours in that space and I hastened to say so. “Yes, yes, Lobsang! I know you can see in that space, for you are one of our most talented in this direction, but I was pretending that you could not see the aura at all because I have to explain all this to you.”

The Medical Lama looked at me reprovingly— reprovingly no doubt, for interrupting the trend of his thoughts. When he thought that I was sufficiently subdued to refrain from further interruption he continued, “First then, there is the etheric layer. Following the etheric layer there is that zone which so few of us can distinguish except as an empty space. Outside of that is the aura itself. The aura does not so much depend upon the animal vitality as upon the spiritual vitality. The aura is composed of swirling bands, and striations of all the colours of the visible spectrum and that means more colours than can be seen with the physical eyes, for the aura is seen by other senses than by the physical sight. Every organ in the human body sends out its own shaft of light, its shaft of rays, which alter and fluctuate as the thoughts of a person fluctuate. Many of these indications are present to a very marked degree in the etheric and in the space beyond, and when the nude body is seen the aura appears to magnify the indications of health or disease, from which it is clear that those of us who are sufficiently clairvoyant can tell of a person’s health or otherwise.”

I knew all about that, this was all child’s play to me, and I had been practicing things like this ever since the operation for “the Third Eye”. I knew of the groups of Medical Lamas who sat beside suffering people and examined the nude body to see how they could be helped. I had thought perhaps that I was going to be trained for work such as that.

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“Now!” said the Medical Lama, “you are being specially trained, highly trained, and when you go to that great Western world beyond our borders it is hoped and thought that you may be able to devise an instrument whereby even those with no occult power at all will be able to see the human aura. Doctors, seeing the human aura, and actually seeing what is wrong with a person, will be able to cure that person’s illnesses. How, we shall discuss later. I know that all this is quite tiring, much of that which I have told you is very well known indeed to you but it may be tiring from this aspect; you are a natural clairvoyant, you may possibly never have thought of the mechanics of the operation of your gift, and that is a matter which must be remedied because a man who knows only half a subject is only half trained and half useful. You, my friend, are going to be very useful indeed! But let us end this session now, Lobsang, we will repair to our own apartments—for one has been set aside for you—and then we can rest and think on those matters upon which we have so briefly touched. For this week you will not be required to attend any Service, that is by order of the Inmost One Himself; all your energies, all your devotions, are to be directed solely to mastering the subjects which I and my colleagues are going to put before you.”

He rose to his feet and I rose to mine. Once again that silver bell was seized in a mighty hand and shaken so vigorously that I really felt that the poor thing would fall to pieces. The attendant monk came running in and the Medical Lama Chinrobnobo said, “You will attend upon Tuesday Lobsang Rampa, for he is an honoured guest here as you are aware. Treat him as you would treat a visiting monk of high degree.” He turned to me and bowed, and of course I hastily bowed back, and then the attendant beckoned for me to follow him.

“Stop!” bawled the Lama Chinrobnobo. “You have forgotten your walnuts!” I rushed back and hastily grabbed up those precious jars, smiling somewhat in embarrassment as I did so, then I hastened on to the waiting attendant.

We went along a short corridor and the attendant ushered me into a very nice room which had a window overlooking the ferry across The Happy River. “I am to look after you, Master,” said the attendant. “The bell is there for your convenience, use it as you will.” He turned and went out.

I turned to that window. The view across the Holy Valley entranced me, for the ferry of inflated yak hides was just putting out from the shore and the boatman was poling along across the swift river. On the other side, I saw, there were three or four men who, by their dress, must have been of some importance—an impression which was confirmed by the obsequious manner of the ferryman. I watched for some minutes, and then, suddenly, I felt more tired than I could imagine possible. I sat down upon the ground without even both-

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ering about a seat cushion, and before I knew anything about it I had toppled over backwards, asleep.

The hours droned away to the accompaniment of clacking Prayer Wheels. Suddenly I sat up, bolt upright, quaking with fear. The Service! I was late for the Service. With my head on one side I listened carefully. Somewhere a voice was chanting a Litany. It was enough. I jumped to my feet and raced for the familiar door. It was not there! With a bone-jarring thud I collided with the stone wall and fell bouncily onto my back. For a moment, there was a blue-white flash inside my head as it too struck the stone, then I recovered and sprang to my feet once more. Panicked at my lateness, I raced around the room and there seemed to be no door. Worse, there was no window either!

“Lobsang!” said a voice from the darkness, “are you ill?” The voice of the attendant brought me back to my senses like a dash of ice water.

“Oh!” I said sheepishly, “I forgot, I thought I was late for Service. I forgot I was excused!” There was a subdued chuckle, and the voice said, “I will light the lamp, for it is very dark this night.”

A little glimmer came from the doorway—it was in a most unexpected place!—and the attendant advanced towards me. “A most amusing interlude,” he said, “I thought at first that a herd of yaks had broken loose and were in here.”

His smile robbed the words of all offence. I settled down again, and the attendant and his light withdrew. Across the lighter darkness that was the window a shooting star flamed into incandescence, and its journey across the countless miles of space was at an end. I rolled over and slept.

Breakfast was the same old dull and dreary tsampa and tea. Nourishing, sustaining, but uninspiring. Then the attendant came and said, “If you are ready, I have to take you elsewhere.”

I rose to my feet and walked with him out of the room. We went a different way this time, into a part of the Chakpori which I did not know existed. Downwards, a long way downwards until I thought we were descending into the bowels of the Iron Mountain itself. Now there was no glimmer of light except from the lamps we carried. At last the attendant stopped, and pointed ahead. “Go on, straight along and turn into the room on the left.” With a nod, he turned and retraced his steps.

I trudged on, wondering “What now?” The Room on the Left was before me. I turned into it and paused in amazement. The first thing to attract my attention was a Prayer Wheel standing in the middle of the room. I had time for

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only a brief glance at it, but even so it appeared to be a very strange Prayer Wheel indeed, then my name was spoken, "Well, Lobsang! We are glad you are here." I looked and there was my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, by his side sat the Great Medical Lama Chinrobnobo, and on the other side of my Guide there sat a very distinguished-looking Indian Lama named Marfata. He had once studied Western medicine, and had indeed studied at some German University which I believe was called Heidelberg. Now he was a Buddhist monk, a lama, of course, but "monk" is the generic term.

The Indian looked at me so searchingly, so piercingly, that I thought he must be looking at the material comprising the back of my robe—he seemed to look right through me. However, on this particular occasion I had nothing bad on my conscience, and I returned his gaze. After all; why should I not gaze at him? I was as good as he, for I was being trained by the Lama Mingyar Dondup and by the Great Medical Lama Chinrobnobo. A smile forced its way across his rigid lips as if its execution caused him intense pain. He nodded, and turned to my Guide, "Yes, I am satisfied that the boy is as you say." My Guide smiled, but there was no forcing of his smile, it was natural, spontaneous, and indeed warming to the heart.

The Great Medical Lama said, "Lobsang, we have brought you down here to this secret room because we want to show you things and discuss things with you. Your Guide and I have examined you and we are indeed satisfied with your powers, powers that are going to be increased in intensity. Our Indian colleague, Marfata, did not think that such a prodigy existed in Tibet. We hope that you will prove all our statements."

I looked at that Indian and I thought, "Well, he is a man who has an exalted opinion of himself." I turned to the Lama Chinrobnobo and said "Respected Sir, the Inmost One who has been good enough to give me an audience on a number of occasions has expressly cautioned me against giving proof, saying that proof was merely a palliative to the idle mind. Those who wanted proof were not capable of accepting the truth of a proof no matter how well proven."

The Medical Lama Chinrobnobo laughed so that I almost feared I would be blown away by the gale of wind, my Guide also laughed, and they both looked at the Indian Marfata who sat looking sourly at me.

"Boy!" said the Indian, "you talk well, but talk proves nothing as you yourself say. Now, tell me, boy, what do you see in me?" I felt rather apprehensive about this, because much of what I saw I did not like.

"Illustrious Sir!" I said, "I fear that if I say what I see then you might in-

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deed take it amiss and consider that I am being merely insolent instead of replying to your question.”

My Guide the Lama Mingyar Dondup nodded in agreement, and across the face of the Great Medical Lama Chinrobnobo a huge, beaming smile expanded like the rising of the full moon.

“Say what you will, boy, for we have no time for fancy talk here,” said the Indian.

For some moments I stood looking at the Great Indian Lama, stood looking until even he stirred a little at the intensity of my gaze, then I said, “Illustrious Sir! You have commanded me to speak as I see, and I understand that my Guide the Lama Mingyar Dondup and the Great Medical Lama Chinrobnobo also want me to speak frankly. Now, this is what I see, I have never seen you before but from your aura and from your thoughts I detect this: You are a man who has traveled extensively, and you have traveled across the great oceans of the world. You have gone to that small island whose name I do not know, but here the people are all white and where there is another small island lying nearby as if it were a foal to the greater land which was the mare. You were very antagonistic toward those people and they were indeed anxious to take some action against you for something connected with... .”

I hesitated here, for the picture was particularly obscure, It was referring to things of which I had not the slightest knowledge. However, I ploughed on. “There was something connected with an Indian city which I assume from your mind was Calcutta, and there was something connected with a black hole where the people of that island were gravely inconvenienced or embarrassed. In some way they thought that you could have saved trouble instead of causing it.” The Great Lama Chinrobnobo laughed again, and it did my ears good to hear that laugh because it indicated that I was on the right track. My Guide gave no indication whatever, but the Indian snorted.

I continued, “You went to another land and I can see the name Heidelberg clearly in your mind. In that land you studied medicine according to many barbarous rites wherein you did much cutting and chopping and sawing, and did not use systems which we here in Tibet use. Eventually you were given some sort of big paper with a lot of seals upon it. I see also from your aura that you are a man with an illness.” I took a deep breath here because I did not know how my next words would be received.

“The illness from which you suffer is one which has no cure, it is one in which the cells of the body run wild and grow as weeds grow, not according to pattern, not according to the ordained way, but spread and obstruct and clutch

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at vital organs. Sir! You are ending your own span upon this earth by the nature of your thoughts which admit of no goodness in the minds of others.”

For several moments—they may have been years to me!—there was not a sound, and then the Great Medical Lama Chinrobnobo said, “That is perfectly correct, Lobsang, that is perfectly correct!” The Indian said, “The boy was probably primed about all this in advance.”

My Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup said, “No one has discussed you; on the contrary much of what he has told us is news to us, for we have not investigated your aura or your mind for you did not so invite us. But the main point at issue is, the boy Tuesday Lobsang Rampa has these powers, and the powers are going to be developed even further. We have no time for quarrels, no place for quarrels, instead we have serious work to do. Come!” He rose to his feet and led me to that big Prayer Wheel.

I looked at that strange thing, and I saw that it was not a Prayer Wheel after all, but instead was a device standing about four feet high, four feet from the ground, and it was about five feet across. There were two little windows at one side and I could see what appeared to be glass set in those windows. At the other side of the machine, and set off-centre, were two very much larger windows. At an opposite side a long handle protruded, but the whole thing was a mystery to me, I had not the slightest idea of what it could be.

The Great Medical Lama said, “This is a device, Lobsang, with which those who are not clairvoyant can see the human aura. The Great Indian Lama Marfata came here to consult us and would not tell us the nature of his complaint, saying that if we knew so much about esoteric medicine we would know his complaint without his telling us. We brought him here that he could be examined with this machine. With his permission he is going to remove his robe, and you are going to look at him first, and you are going to tell us just what his trouble is. Then we shall use this machine and see how far your findings and the findings of the machine coincide.”

My Guide indicated a spot against a dark wall and the Indian walked to it and removed his robe and other garments so that he stood brown and bare against the wall. “Lobsang! Take a very good look at him and tell us what you see,” said my Guide. I looked not at the Indian, but some way to one side, I put my eyes out of focus as that is the easiest way of seeing the aura. That is, I did not use normal binocular vision, but instead saw with each eye separately. It is a difficult thing indeed to explain, but it consisted in looking with one eye to the left and one eye to the right, and that is just a knack—a trick—which can be learned by almost anyone.

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I looked at the Indian, and his aura glowed and fluctuated. I saw that he was a great man indeed and of high intellectual power but, unfortunately, his whole outlook had been soured by the mysterious illness within him. As I looked at him I spoke my thoughts, spoke them just as they came into my mind. I was not at all aware of how intently my Guide and the Great Medical Lama were listening to my words. "It is clear that the illness has been brought on by many tensions within the body. The Great Indian Lama has been dissatisfied and frustrated, and that has acted against his health, causing the cells of his body to run wild, to escape from the direction of the Overself. Thus he has this complaint here" (I pointed to his liver) "and because he is a rather sharp tempered man his complaint is aggravated every time he gets cross. It is clear from his aura that if he would become more tranquil, more placid like my Guide the Lama Mingyar Dondup, he would stay upon this earth longer and so would accomplish more of his task without the necessity of having to come again."

Once again there was a silence, and I was pleased to see that the Indian Lama nodded as if in complete agreement with my diagnosis. The Medical Lama Chinrobnobo turned to that strange machine and looked through the little windows. My Guide moved to the handle and turned with increasing force until a word from the Medical Lama Chinrobnobo caused him to maintain the rate of rotation at constant speed. For some time the Lama Chinrobnobo gazed through that device, then he straightened up and without a word the Lama Mingyar Dondup took his place, while the Medical Lama Chinrobnobo turned the handle as had previously my Guide. Eventually they finished their examination, and stood together, obviously conversing by telepathy. I made no attempt whatever to intercept their thoughts because to do so would have been a gross slight and would have put me "above my station".

At last, they turned to the Indian and said, "All that Tuesday Lobsang Rampa has told you is correct. We have examined your aura most thoroughly, and we believe that you have cancer of the liver. We believe also that this has been caused by certain shortness of temper. We believe that if you will lead a quiet life you still have a number of years left to you, years in which you can accomplish your task. We are prepared to make representations so that if you agree to our plan you will be permitted to remain here at Chakpori."

The Indian discussed matters for a time, and then motioned to Chinrobnobo; together they left the room. My Guide the Lama Mingyar Dondup patted me on the shoulder and said, "Well done, Lobsang, well done! Now I want to show this machine to you."

He walked across to that very strange device and lifted up one side of the top. The whole thing moved, and inside I saw a series of arms radiating

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from a central shaft. At the extreme end of the arms there were prisms of glass in ruby red, blue, yellow and white. As the handle was turned belts connected from it to the shaft caused the arms to rotate and I observed that each prism in turn was brought to the line which was seen by looking through the two eye-pieces. My Guide showed me how the thing worked and then said, "Of course this is a very crude and clumsy affair. We use it here for experiment, and in the hope of one day producing a smaller version. You would never need to use it, Lobsang, but there are not many who have the power of seeing the aura as clearly as you. At some time I shall explain the working in more detail, but briefly, it deals with a heterodyne principle wherein rapidly rotating coloured prisms interrupt the line of sight and thus destroy the normal image of the human body and intensify the much weaker rays of the aura."

He replaced the lid and turned away to another device standing on a table at a far corner. He was just leading the way to that table when the Medical Lama Chinrobnobo came into the room again and joined Us.

"Ah!" he said, coming over to us. "so you are going to test his thought power? Good! I must be in on this!"

My Guide pointed to a queer cylinder of what appeared to be rough paper. "This, Lobsang, is thick, rough paper. You will see that it has innumerable holes made in it, holes made with a very blunt instrument so that the paper is torn and leaves projections. We then folded that paper so that all the projections were on the outside and the sheet, instead of being flat, formed a cylinder. Across the top of the cylinder we affixed a rigid straw, and upon a small pedestal we fixed a sharp needle. Thus we have the cylinder supported on an almost frictionless bearing. Now watch me!"

He sat down, and put his hands on either side of the cylinder, not touching the cylinder, but leaving about an inch or an inch and a half space between his hands and the projections. Soon the cylinder started to spin, and I was astounded as the thing picked up speed and was soon rotating at quite a merry rate. My Guide stopped it with a touch, and placed his hands in the opposite direction so that the fingers, instead of pointing away from his body as had been the case, now pointed toward his body. The cylinder started to spin but in the opposite direction!

"You are blowing upon it!" I said.

"Everyone says that!" said the Medical Lama Chinrobnobo, "but they are completely wrong."

The Great Medical Lama went to a recess in the far wall, and returned bearing a sheet of glass, it was quite a thick sheet, and he carried it carefully to

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my Guide the Lama Mingyar Dondup. My Guide stopped the cylinder from rotating and sat quiet while the Great Medical Lama Chinrobnobo placed the sheet of glass between my Guide and the paper cylinder. "Think about rotation," said the Medical Lama. My Guide apparently did so, for the cylinder started to rotate again. It was quite impossible for my Guide or for anyone else to have blown on the cylinder and made it rotate because of the glass.

He stopped the cylinder again and then turned to me and said, "You try it, Lobsang!" He rose from his seat and I took his place. I sat down and placed my hands just as had my Guide.

The Medical Lama Chinrobnobo held the sheet of glass in front of me so that my breath would not influence the rotation of the cylinder. I sat there feeling like a fool.

Apparently the cylinder thought I was one too, for nothing happened. "Think of making it rotate, Lobsang," said my Guide. I did so, and immediately the thing started to go round. For a moment I felt like dropping everything and running—I thought the thing was bewitched, then reason (of a sort!) prevailed and I just sat still.

"That device, Lobsang," said my Guide, "runs by the force of the human aura. You think of rotating it and your aura puts a swirl on the thing which causes it to turn. You may be interested to know that a device such as this has been experimented with in all the greater countries of the world. All the greatest scientists have tried to explain away the workings of this thing, but Western people, of course, cannot believe in etheric force and so they invent explanations which are even stranger than the actual force of the etheric!"

The Great Medical Lama said, "I am feeling quite hungry, Mingyar Dondup, I feel that it is time we repaired to our rooms for a rest and for sustenance. We must not tax the young man's abilities or his endurance, for he will get enough of that in the future." We turned, and the lights were extinguished in that room, and we made our way up the stone corridor and into the main building of the Chakpori.

Soon I was in a room with my Guide the Lama Mingyar Dondup. Soon—happy thought—I was consuming food and feeling the better for it. "Eat well, Lobsang," said my Guide "for later in the day we shall see you again and discuss with you other matters."

For an hour or so I rested in my room, looking out of the window, because I had a weakness; I always liked to look from high places and watch the world moving beneath. I loved to watch the traders wending their slow way through the Western Gate, their every step indicating their delight at having

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reached the end of a long and arduous journey through the high mountain passes. Traders in the past had told me of the wonderful view there was from a certain spot on a high pass where, as one came from the Indian border, one could look down between a cleft in the mountains and gaze upon the Sacred City with its roof tops agleam with gold and off by the side of the mountains, the white walls of "The Rice Heap", looking indeed like a heap of rice as it sprawled in bounteous profusion down the side of the mountainous slopes. I loved to watch the ferryman crossing the Happy River, and I hoped always for the sight of a puncture in his inflated hide boat. I longed to watch him gradually sink from sight until only his head protruded above the water. But I was never that fortunate, the ferryman always reached the other side, took on his load, and returned again.

Soon, once more I was in that deep room with my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup and the Great Medical Lama Chinrobnobo. "Lobsang!" said the great Medical Lama, "you must be sure that if you are going to examine a patient in order that you may assist him or her, the clothes be entirely removed."

"Honourable Medical Lama!" I said, in some confusion, "I can think of no reason why I should deprive a person of their clothing in this cold weather, for I can see their aura perfectly without there being any need whatsoever to remove a single garment, and oh! Respected Medical Lama! How could I possibly ask a woman to remove her clothing?"

My eyes rolled upwards in horror at the mere thought. I must have presented quite a comical figure, for both my Guide and the Medical Lama burst out laughing. They sat down, and really enjoyed themselves with their laughter. I stood in front of them feeling remarkably foolish, but really, I was quite puzzled about these things. I could see an aura perfectly with no trouble at all, and I saw no reason why I should depart from what was my own normal practice.

"Lobsang!" said the Medical Lama, "you are a very gifted clairvoyant, but there are some things which you do not yet see. We have had a remarkable demonstration from you of your ability in seeing the human aura, but you would not have seen the liver complaint of the Indian Lama Marfata if he had not removed his clothing."

I reflected upon this, and when I thought about it I had to admit that it was correct; I had looked at the Indian Lama while he had been robed, and while I had seen much about his character and basic traits, I still had not noticed the liver complaint. "You are perfectly correct, Honourable Medical Lama," I said, "but I should like some further training from you in this matter."

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My Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, looked at me and said, "When you look at a person's aura you want to see the person's aura, you are not concerned with the thoughts of the sheep whence came the wool which was made into a robe. Every aura is influenced by that which interferes with its direct rays. We have here a sheet of glass, and if I breathe upon that glass, it will effect what you see through the glass. Similarly, although this glass is transparent, it actually does alter the light or rather the colour of the light, which you would see when looking through it. In the same way, if you look through a piece of coloured glass all the vibrations which you receive from an object are altered in intensity by the action of the coloured glass. Thus it is that a person whose body has upon it clothing, or ornaments of any kind, has his aura modified according to the etheric content of the clothing or ornament." I thought about it, and I had to agree that there was quite a lot in what he said. He continued, "A further point is this, every organ of the body projects its own picture—its own state of health or sickness—onto the etheric, and the aura, when uncovered and free from the influence of clothes, magnifies and intensifies the impression which one receives. Thus it is quite definite that if you are going to help a person in health or in sickness, then you will have to examine him without his clothing." He smiled at me and said, "And if the weather be cold, why then, Lobsang, you will have to take him to a warmer place!"

"Honourable Lama," I said "some time ago you told me that you were working on a device which would enable one to cure illness through the aura."

"That is perfectly correct, Lobsang," said my Guide, "illness is merely a dissonance in the body vibrations. An organ has its rate of molecular vibration disturbed and so it is considered to be a sick organ. If we could actually see how much the vibration of an organ departs from the normal, then, by restoring the rate of vibration to what it should be, we have effected a cure. In the case of a mental affliction, the brain usually receives messages from the Overself which it cannot correctly interpret, and so the actions resulting are those which depart from that which is accepted as normal actions for a human. Thus, if the human is not able to reason or act in a normal manner, he is said to have some mental ailment. By measuring the discrepancy—the under-stimulation—we can assist a person to recover normal balance. The vibrations may be lower than normal resulting in under-stimulation, or they may be higher than normal which would give an effect similar to that of a brain fever. Quite definitely illness can be cured by intervention through the aura."

The Great Medical Lama interrupted here, and said, "By the way, Respected Colleague, the Lama Marfata was discussing this matter with me, and he said that at certain places in India—at certain secluded lamaseries—they were experimenting with a very high voltage device known as a..." he hesi-

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tated and said, "...it is a deGraaf generator."

He was a bit uncertain about his terms, but he was making a truly manful effort to give us the exact information.

"This generator apparently developed an extraordinarily high voltage at an extraordinarily low current; applied in a certain way to the body it caused the intensity of the aura to increase many many times so that even the non-clairvoyant could clearly observe it. I am told also that photographs have been taken of a human aura under these conditions."

My Guide nodded solemnly, and said, "Yes, it is also possible to view the human aura by means of a special dye, a liquid which is sandwiched between two plates of glass. By arranging appropriate lighting and background, and viewing the nude human body through this screen, many people can indeed see the aura."

I burst in and said, "But, Honourable Sirs! Why do people have to use all these tricks? I can see the aura, why cannot they?" My two mentors laughed again, this time they did not feel it necessary to explain the difference between training such as I had had and the training of the average man or woman in the street.

The Medical Lama said, "Now we probe in the dark, we try to cure our patients by rule of thumb, by herbs and pills and potions. We are like blind men trying to find a pin dropped on the ground. I would like to see a small device so that any non-clairvoyant person could look through this device and see the human aura, see all the faults of the human aura, and, in seeing would be able to cure the discrepancy or the deficiency which truly was the cause of the illness."

For the rest of that week I was shown things by hypnotism and by telepathy, and my powers were increased and intensified, and we had talk after talk on the best ways to see the aura and to develop a machine which would also see the aura, and then, upon the last night of that week, went to my little room in the Chakpori Lamasery and looked out of the window, thinking that on the morrow I would return again to that bigger dormitory where I slept in company with so many others.

The lights in the Valley were atwinkle. The last dying rays peering over the rocky rim of our Valley glanced down, flicking the golden roofs as if with sparkling fingers, sending up showers of golden light, and in doing so breaking the light into iridescent colours which were of the spectrum of the gold itself. Blues and yellows and reds, and even some green struggled to attract the eye, growing dimmer and dimmer as the light faded. Soon the Valley itself

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was as encased in dark velvet, a dark blue-violet or purple velvet which could almost be felt. Through my open window I could smell the scent of the willows, and the scent of plants in the garden so far below me; a vagrant breeze wafted stronger scents to my nostrils, pollen, and budding flowers.

The last dying rays of the sun sank completely out of sight, no more did those probing fingers of light come over the edge of our rock-bound Valley; instead they shot off into the darkening sky, and reflected on low lying clouds showing red and blue. Gradually the night became darker as the sun sank further and further beyond our world. Soon there were bright specks of light in the dark purple sky, the light of Saturn, of Venus, of Mars. And then came the light of the Moon, hanging gibbous in the sky with all the pock marks showing plain and clear, and across the face of the Moon drifted a light fleecy cloud. It reminded me of a woman drawing a garment across herself after having been examined through her aura. I turned away, resolved in every fiber of my being that I would do all I could to increase the knowledge of the human aura, and to help those who went out into the great world and brought help and ease to suffering millions. I lay down upon the stone floor, and almost as soon as my head touched my folded robe I fell asleep and knew no more.

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CHAPTER NINE

The silence was profound. The air of concentration intense. At long intervals there came an almost inaudible rustle which soon subsided again into deathlike quiet. I looked about me, looking at the long lines of motionless robed figures sitting erect on the floor. These were intent men, men concentrating on the doings of the outside world. Some, indeed, were more concerned with the doings of the world outside this one! My eyes roamed about, dwelling first on one august figure, and then on another. Here was a great Abbot from a far-off district.

There was a lama in poor and humble dress, a man come down from the mountains. Unthinkingly I moved one of the long, low tables so that I had more room. The silence was oppressive, a living silence, a silence that should not be, with so many men here.

Crash. The silence was rudely and loudly shattered. I jumped a foot off the ground, in a sitting position, and somehow spun round at the same time. Sprawled out at full length, still in a daze, was a Library messenger, with wooden-backed books still clattering around him. Coming in, heavily laden, he had not seen the table which I had moved. Being only eighteen inches from the ground it had effectively tripped him. Now it was on top of him.

Solicitous hands gently picked up the books and dusted them off. Books are revered in Tibet. Books contain knowledge and must never be abused or mishandled. Now the thought was for the books and not for the man. I picked up the table and moved it out of the way. Wonder of wonders, no one thought that I was in any way to blame! The messenger, rubbing his head, was trying to work out what happened. I had not been near; obviously I could not have tripped him. Shaking his head in astonishment, he turned and went out. Soon calm was restored, and the lamas went back to their reading in the Library.

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Having been damaged top and bottom (literally!) while working in the kitchens, I had been permanently banished therefrom. Now, for “menial” work I had to go to the great Library and dust the carvings on book covers and generally keep the place clean. Tibetan books are big and heavy. The wooden covers are intricately carved, giving the title and often a picture as well. It was heavy work, lifting the books from shelves, carrying them silently to my table, dusting them and then returning each book to its allotted place.

The Librarian was very particular, carefully examining each book to see that it really was clean. There were wooden covers which housed magazines and papers from countries outside our boundaries. I liked particularly to look at these, although I could not read a single word. Many of these months-old foreign papers had pictures, and I would pore over them whenever possible. The more the Librarian tried to stop me, the more I delved into these forbidden books whenever his attention was taken from me. Pictures of wheeled vehicles fascinated me. There were, of course, no wheeled vehicles in the whole of Tibet, and our Prophecies indicated most clearly that with the advent of wheels into Tibet there would be the “beginning of the end”. Tibet would later be invaded by an evil force which was spreading across the world like a cancerous blight. We hoped that, in spite of the Prophecy, larger, more powerful nations, would not be interested in our little country which had no warlike intentions, no designs upon the living space of others.

I looked at pictures, and I was fascinated. On one magazine (of course I do not know what it was called) I saw some pictures—a whole series of them—which showed the magazine being printed. There were huge machines with great rollers and immense cog wheels. Men, in the pictures, were working like maniacs, and I thought how different it was here in Tibet. Here one worked with the pride of craftsmanship, with the pride of doing a job well. No thought of commerce entered the mind of the craftsman of Tibet. I turned and looked at those pages again, and then I thought of how we were doing things.

Down in the Village of Sho books were being printed. Skilled monk-carvers were carving onto fine woods Tibetan characters, carving them with the slowness which ensured absolute accuracy, absolute fidelity to minute detail. After the carvers finished each board of print others would take that board and would polish it so that no flaw or roughness remained on the wood, then the board would be taken away to be inspected by others for accuracy as to text, for no mistake was ever allowed to creep into a Tibetan book. Time did not matter, accuracy did.

With the boards all carved, all carefully polished and inspected for errors or flaws, it would pass to the monk-printers. They would lay the board

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face up on a bench, and then ink would be rolled onto the raised, carved words.

Of course the words were all carved in reverse, so that when printed they would appear the right way round. With the board inked and carefully inspected once again to make sure that no portion was left uninked, a sheet of stiff paper akin to the papyrus of Egypt would be quickly spread across the type with its inked surface. A smooth rolling pressure would be applied to the back of the sheet of paper, and then it would be stripped off from the printing surface in one swift movement. Monk-inspectors would immediately take the page and examine it with minute care for any fault—any flaw—and if there was any flaw, the paper would not be scrapped or burned, but would be made up into bundles.

The printed word, in Tibet, is held as near-sacred, it is considered to be an insult to learning to destroy or mutilate paper which bears words of learning or religious words; thus in the course of time Tibet has accumulated bundle after bundle, bale after bale, of slightly imperfect sheets.

If the sheet of paper was considered satisfactorily printed, the printers were given the “go-ahead” and they went on producing various sheets, each one of which was as carefully examined for flaws as was the first. I often used to watch these printers at work, and in the course of my studies I had to undertake their own work myself. I carved the printed words in reverse, I smoothed the carvings after, and under meticulous supervision I inked and later printed books.

Tibetan books are not bound as are Western books. A Tibetan book is a long affair, or perhaps it would be better to say it was a wide affair and very short, because a Tibetan line of print extends for several feet, but the page may be only a foot high. All the sheets containing the necessary pages would be carefully laid out and, in the fullness of time—there was no hurry—they would dry. When they had been allowed time and time again for drying, the books would be assembled. First there would be a baseboard to which there were attached two tapes, then upon the baseboard would be assembled the pages of the book in their correct order, and when each book was thus assembled, upon the pile of printed pages would be placed another heavy board which formed the cover. This heavy board would bear intricate carvings, perhaps showing scenes from the book, and of course, giving the title. The two tapes from the bottom board would now be brought up and fastened across the top board, some considerable pressure would be exerted so that all the sheets were forced down into one compact mass. Particularly valuable books would then be carefully wrapped in silk and the wrappings would be sealed so that only those with adequate authority could open the wrapping and dis-

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turb the peace of that so carefully printed book!

It seemed to me that many of these Western pictures were of women in a remarkable state of undress; it occurred to me that these countries must be very hot countries, for how otherwise could women go about in such a scanty state? On some of the pictures people were lying down, obviously dead, while standing over them would be perhaps a villainous looking man with a piece of metal tubing in one hand from whence issued smoke. I never could understand the purpose of this, for, to judge from my own impressions, the people of the Western world made it their chief hobby to go round and kill each other, then big men with strange dresses on would come and put metal things on the hands, or wrists, of the person with the smoking tube.

The underclad ladies did not distress me at all, or excite any particular interest in me, for Buddhists and Hindus, and, in fact, all the peoples of the East knew well that sex was necessary in human life: It was known that sexual experience was perhaps the highest form of ecstasy which the human could experience while still in the flesh.

For that reason many of our religious paintings showed a man and a woman—usually referred to as God and Goddess—in the closest of close embraces. Because the facts of life, and of birth, were so well known, there was no particular need to disguise what were facts, and so sometimes detail was almost photographic. To us this was in no way pornographic, in no way indecent, but was merely the most convenient method of indicating that with the union of male and female certain specific sensations were generated, and it was explained that with the union of souls much greater pleasure could be experienced, but that, of course, would not be upon this world.

From talks with traders in the City of Lhasa, in the village of Sho, and those who rested by the wayside at the Western Gate, I gathered the amazing information that in the Western world it was considered indecent to expose one's body to the gaze of another. I could not understand why this should be so, for the most elementary fact of life was that there had to be two sexes. I remembered a conversation with an old trader who frequented the route between Kalimpong in India and Lhasa. Throughout some considerable time I had made it my business to meet him at the Western Gate, and to greet him at one more successful visit to our land. Often we would stand and chat for quite a while, I would give him news about Lhasa and he would give me news about the great world outside. Often, too, he would bring books and magazines for my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, and I would then have the pleasant task of delivering them. This particular trader once said to me, "I have told you much about the people of the West, but I still do not understand them, one of

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their sayings in particular just does not make sense to me.

“It is this; Man is made in the image of God, they say, and yet they are afraid to show their body which they claim is made in the image of God. Does it mean, then, that they are ashamed of God’s form?” He would look at me questioningly, and I of course was quite at a loss, I just could not answer his question. Man is made in the image of God. Therefore, if God is the ultimate in perfection as should be the case, there should be no shame in exposing an image of God. We so-called heathens were not ashamed of our bodies, we knew that without sex there would be no continuation of the race. We knew that sex, on appropriate occasions, and in appropriate surroundings of course, increased the spirituality of a man and of a woman.

I was also astounded when I was told that some men and women who had been married, perhaps for years, had never seen the unclad body of the other. When I was told that they “made love” only with the blinds down and the light out I recall I thought my informant was taking me for a country bumpkin who really was too foolish to know what was going on in the world, and after one such session I decided that at the first opportunity I would ask my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, about sex in the Western world. I turned away from the Western Gate, and dashed across the road to the narrow, dangerous path which we boys of Chakpori used in preference to the regular path. This path would have frightened a mountaineer; frequently it frightened us as well, but it was a point of honour not to use the other path unless we were in company with our seniors and, presumably, betters. The mode of progression upwards entailed climbing by hand up jagged “teeth” of rock, dangling precariously from certain exposed routes, and at all times doing those things which no presumably sane person would do if they were paid a fortune. Eventually I reached the top, and got into the Chakpori by a route which was also known to us and which would have given the Proctors fits if they too had known.

So, at last I stood within the Inner Courtyard far more exhausted than if I had come up the orthodox path, but at least honour was satisfied. I had done the trip up somewhat faster than some of the boys did it down.

I shook the dust and small stones out of my robe, and emptied my bowl which had collected numerous small ants, and then feeling fairly presentable I wended my way inwards in search of my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup. As I rounded a corner I saw him proceeding away from me and so I called, “Ow! Honourable Lama!” He stopped, and turned and walked towards me, an action which possibly no other man in Chakpori would have done, for he treated every man and boy as equal. As he used to say, it is not the outward form, it is not the body which one is at present wearing but what is inside— what is con-

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trolling the body—that counts. My Guide himself was a Great Incarnation who easily had been Recognized on his return to body. It was an always-remembered lesson for me that this great man was humble and always considered the feelings of those who were not merely “not so great”, but some who were—to put it bluntly—downright low.

“Well now Lobsang!” said my Guide, “I saw you coming up that forbidden path, and if I had been a Proctor you would have been smarting in quite a number of places now; you would have been glad to remain standing for many hours.” He laughed, and said, “However, I used to do substantially the same thing myself, and I still get what is possibly a forbidden thrill in seeing others do what I can no longer do. Well, what is the rush any how?”

I looked up at him and said, “Honourable Lama, I have been hearing horrible things about the people of the Western world and my mind is indeed in a constant turmoil, for I am unable to tell if I am being laughed at, if I am being made to look a worse fool than usual, or whether the marvels which have been described to me are indeed fact.”

“Come with me; Lobsang,” said my Guide, “I am just going to my room I was going to meditate but let us discuss things instead. Meditation can wait.” We turned and walked along side by side to the Lama Mingyar Dondup’s room—the one which overlooked the Jewel Park. I entered the room in his footsteps, and instead of immediately sitting down, he rang for the attendant to bring us tea. Then, with me by his side, he moved across to the window and looked out across that lovely expanse of land. Land which was one of the most beautiful places perhaps in the whole world.

Below us, slightly to our left, was the fertile wooded garden known as the Norbu Linga of Jewel Park. The beautiful clear water sparkled among the trees, and the Inmost One’s small temple set upon an island was gleaming in the sunlight. Someone was crossing the rocky causeway—a path across the water made of flat stones with spaces between so that the water could flow free and the fish would have no bar. I looked carefully and thought I could distinguish one of the high members of the Government.

“Yes, Lobsang, he is going to see the Inmost One,” said my Guide in answer to my unspoken thought. Together we watched for some time for it was pleasant here looking out upon that park with, beyond it, The Happy River sparkling and dancing as if with the joy of a beautiful day. We could also see down by the Ferry, one of my favourite spots. It was a never ending source of pleasure and amazement to me to see the ferryman get on his inflated skin boat and paddle away merrily to the other side.

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Below us, between us and the Norbu Linga, pilgrims were making their slow way along the Lingkor Road. They went along giving hardly a glance to our own Chakpori but keeping a constant lookout to see if possibly they could see anything of interest from the Jewel Park, for it must have been common knowledge to the ever-alert pilgrims that the Inmost One would be at the Norbu Linga. I could see, too, the Kashya Linga, a little park, well wooded, which was by the side of the Ferry Road. There was a small road leading from the Lingkor Road down to the Kyi Chu, and it was used mainly by travelers who wanted to use the Ferry. Some, however, used it to reach the Lamas' Garden which was on the other side of the Ferry Road.

The attendant brought in tea for us and pleasant food as well. My Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup said, "Come, Lobsang, let us break our fast, for men who are going to debate must not be empty inside unless their head so proves to be empty!" He sat down on one of the hard cushions which we of Tibet use instead of chairs, for we sit upon the floor cross-legged. So seated, he motioned for me to follow his example, which I did with alacrity because the sight of food was always one to make me hurry. We ate in comparative silence. In Tibet, particularly among monks, it was not considered seemly to speak or to make a noise while food was before us. Monks alone ate in silence, but if they were in a congregation of any great number a Reader would read aloud from the Sacred Books.

This Reader would be in a high place where, in addition to seeing his book, he could look out across the gathering monks, and see immediately those who were so engrossed with their food that they had no time for his words. When there was a congregation of monks eating, then Proctors also would be present to see that there was no talking except for the monk-Reader. But we were alone; we passed a few desultory remarks to each other, knowing that many of the old customs, such as remaining silent at meals, were good for discipline when one was in a throng, but were not necessary for just a pair such as we. So, in my conceit, I classed myself as an associate of one of the truly great men of my country.

"Well Lobsang," said my Guide when we had finished our meal, "tell me what it is that bothers you so?"

"Honourable Lama" I said in some excitement, "a trader passing through here, and with whom I was discussing matters of some moment at the Western Gate, gave me some remarkable information about the people of the West. He told me that they thought our religious paintings obscene. He told me some incredible things about their sex habits, and I am still not at all sure that he was not taking me for a fool."

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My Guide looked at me and thought for moment or two, then he said, "To go into this matter Lobsang, would take more than one session. We have to go to our Service and the time is near for that. Let us just discuss one aspect of this first, shall we?" I nodded, very eagerly, because I really was most puzzled about all this.

My Guide then said, "All this springs from religion. The religion of the West is different from the religion of the East. We should look into this and see what bearing it has on the subject." He arranged his robes about him more comfortably, and rang for the attendant to clear the things from the table. When that had been done, he turned to me and started a discussion which I found to be of enthralling interest.

"Lobsang," he said, "we must draw a parallel between one of the religions of the West and our own Buddhist religion. You will realize from your lessons that the Teachings of our Lord Gautama have been altered somewhat in the course of time. Throughout the years and the centuries which have elapsed since the passing from this earth of The Gautama and His elevation to Buddhahood, the Teachings which He personally taught have changed. Some of us think they have changed for the worse. Others think that the Teachings have been brought into line with modern thought." He looked at me to see if I was following him with sufficient attention, to see if I understood what he was talking about. I understood and I followed him perfectly.

He nodded to me briefly and then continued. "We had our Great Being whom we call Gautama, whom some call The Buddha. The Christians also had their Great Being. Their Great Being propounded certain Teachings. Legend and, in fact, actual records testify to the fact that their Great Being who, according to their own Scriptures, wandered abroad in the Wilderness, actually visited India and Tibet in search of information, in search of knowledge, about a religion which would be suitable for Western mentalities and spiritualities. This Great Being came to Lhasa and actually visited our Cathedral, The Jo Kang. The Great Being then returned to the West and formulated a religion which was in every way admirable and suitable for the Western people. With the Passing of that Great Being from this earth, as our own Gautama passed, certain dissensions arose in the Christian Church. Some sixty years after that Passing, a Convention, or Meeting, was held at a place called Constantinople. Certain changes were made in Christian dogma, certain changes were made in Christian belief. Probably some of the priests of the day felt that they had to put in a few torments in order to keep some of the more refractory of their congregation in good order." Again he looked at me to see if I was following him. Again I indicated that I was not merely following him, but that I was vastly interested.

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“The men who attended that Convention at Constantinople in the year 60 were men who were not sympathetic toward women, just as some of our monks feel faint at the mere thought of a woman. The majority of them regarded sex as something unclean, something which should only be resorted to in the case of absolute necessity in order to increase the race. These were men who had no great sexual urges themselves, no doubt they had other urges, perhaps some of those urges were spiritual—I do not know—I only know that in the year 60 they decided that sex was unclean, sex was the work of the devil. They decided that children were brought into the world unclean and were not fit to go to a reward until in some way they had been cleansed first.” He paused a moment and then smiled as he said, “I do not know what is supposed to happen to all the millions of babies born before this meeting at Constantinople!

“You will understand, Lobsang, that I am giving you information about Christianity as I understand it. Possibly when you go to live among these people you will have some different impression or different information which may in some way modify my own opinions and teachings.” As he finished his statement the conches sounded, and the temple trumpets blared. About us there was the ordered bustle of disciplined men getting ready for the Service. We too stood up and brushed off our robes before making our way down to the Temple for the Service.

Before leaving me at the entrance, my Guide said, “Come to my room after, Lobsang, and we will continue our discussion.”

So I entered into the Temple and I took my place among my fellows, and I said my prayers and I thanked my own particular God that I was a Tibetan the same as my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup. It was beautiful in the old Temple, the air of worship, the gently drifting clouds of incense which kept us in touch with people on other planes of existence. Incense is not just a pleasant smell, not something which “disinfects” a Temple; it is a living force, a force which is so arranged that by picking the particular type of incense we can actually control the rate of vibration. Tonight, in the Temple, the incense was floating and giving a mellow, old world atmosphere to the place. I looked out from my place among the boys of my group, looked out into the dim mists of the Temple building. There was the deep chanting of the old lamas accompanied by, at times, the silver bells. Tonight we had a Japanese monk with us. He had come all the way across our land after having stopped in India for some time. He was a great man in his own country, and he had brought with him his wooden drums, drums which play such a great part in the religion of the Japanese monks. I marveled at the versatility of the Japanese monk, at the remarkable music he produced from his drums. It seemed truly amazing to me that hitting a sort of wooden box could sound so very musical; he had the wooden drum and he

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had sort of clappers, each with little bells attached, and also our own lamas accompanied him with silver bells, with the great temple conch booming out in appropriate time. It seemed to me that the whole Temple vibrated, the walls themselves seemed to dance and shimmer, and the mists away in the distance of the far recesses seemed to form into faces, the faces of long-dead lamas. But for once, all too soon, the Service had ended, and I hurried off as arranged to my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup.

“You have not wasted much time, Lobsang!” said my Guide cheerfully. “I thought perhaps you would be stopping to have one of those innumerable snacks!”

“No, Honorable Lama “ I said, “I am anxious to get some enlightenment, for I confess the subject of sex in the Western world is one which has caused me a lot of astonishment after having heard so much about it from traders and others.”

He laughed at me and said, “Sex causes a lot of interest everywhere! It is sex, after all, which keeps people on this earth. We will discuss it as you require it so.”

“Honourable Lama,” I said, “you said previously that sex was the second greatest force in the world. What did you mean by that? If sex is so necessary in order to keep the world populated why is it not the most important force?”

“The greatest force in the world, Lobsang,” said my Guide, “is not sex, the greatest force of all is imagination, for without imagination there would be no sexual impulse. If a male had no imagination, then the male could not be interested in the female. Without imagination there would be no writers, no artists, there would be nothing whatever that was constructive or good!”

“But, Honourable Lama,” I said, “are you saying that imagination is necessary for sex? And if you are, how does imagination apply to animals?”

“Imagination is possessed by animals, Lobsang, just as it is possessed by humans. Many people think that animals are mindless creatures, without any form of intelligence, without any form of reason, yet I, who have lived a surprisingly long number of years, tell you differently.”

My Guide looked at me, and then shaking a finger at me he said, “You profess to be fond of the Temple cats, are you going to tell me that they have no imagination? You always speak to the Temple cats, you stop to caress them. After you have been affectionate with them once they will wait for you a second time, and a third time, and so on. If this were mere insensitive reactions, if these were just brain patterns, then the cat would not wait for you on that sec-

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ond or third occasion, but would wait until the habit had been formed. No, Lobsang, any animal has imagination. An animal imagines the pleasures in being with its mate, and then the inevitable occurs!”

When I came to think about it, to dwell upon the subject, it was perfectly clear to me that my Guide was absolutely right. I had seen little birds, little hens, fluttering their wings in much the same way as young women flutter their eyelids! I had watched little birds and seen very real anxiety as they waited for their mates to return from the unceasing forage for food. I had seen the joy with which a loving little bird had greeted her mate upon his return. It was obvious to me, now that I thought about it, that animals really had imagination, and so I could see the sense of my Guide’s remarks that imagination was the greatest force on earth.

“One of the traders told me that the more occult a person was the more he was opposed to sex, Honourable Lama,” I said. “Is this true, or am I being teased? I have heard so many very strange things that I really do not know how I stand in the matter.”

The Lama Mingyar Dondup nodded sadly, as he replied, “It is perfectly true, Lobsang, that many people who are intensely interested in occult matters are intensely antipathetic to sex, and for a special reason; you have been told before that the greatest occultists are not normal; that is, they have something wrong with them physically. A person may have a grave disease, such as T.B., or cancer, or anything of that nature. A person may have some nerve complaint—whatever it is, it is an illness and that illness increases metaphysical perceptions.”

He frowned slightly as he continued, “Many people find that the sexual impulse is a great drive. Some people for one reason or another use methods of sublimating that sexual drive, and they may turn to things spiritual. Once a man or a woman has turned away from a thing they become a deadly enemy to that thing. There is no greater reformer—or greater campaigner—against the evils of drink than the reformed drunkard! In the same way, a man or a woman who has renounced sex (possibly because they could not satisfy or be satisfied!) will turn to occult matters, and all the drive which formerly went (successfully or unsuccessfully) into sexual adventures is now devoted to occult adventures. But unfortunately these people so often tend to be unbalanced about it; they tend to bleat that only in renouncing sex is it possible to progress. Nothing could be more fantastic, nothing could be more distorted. Some of the greatest people are able to enjoy a normal life and also to progress vastly in metaphysics.”

Just at that moment the Great Medical Lama Chinrobnobo came in, we

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greeted him and he sat down with us. "I am just telling Lobsang some matters about sex and occultism," said my Guide.

"Ah yes!" said the Lama Chinrobnobo, "it is time he was given some information on this; I have thought so for a long time."

My Guide continued, "It is clear that those who use sex normally, as it is meant to be used, increase their own spiritual force. Sex is not a matter to be abused, but on the other hand neither is it a matter to be repudiated. By bringing vibrations to a person that person can increase spiritually. I want to point out to you, however," he said looking sternly at me, "that the sexual act should only be indulged in by those who are in love, by those who are bound together by spiritual affinity. That which is illicit, unlawful, is mere prostitution of the body and can harm one as much as the other can help one. In the same way a man or a woman should have only one partner, eschewing all temptations which would lead one from the path of truth and righteousness."

The Lama Chinrobnobo said, "But there is another matter upon which you should dwell, Respected Colleague, and it is this, the matter referring to birth control. I will leave you to deal with it." He rose to his feet, bowed gravely to us and left the room.

My Guide waited for a moment, and then said, "Are you tired of this yet, Lobsang?"

"No, Sir!" I replied, "I am anxious to learn all I can for all this is strange to me."

"Then you should know that in the early days of life upon earth peoples were divided into families. Throughout areas of the world there were small families which, with the passage of time became big families. As seems to be inevitable among humans, quarrels and dissensions occurred. Family fought against family. The victors killed the men they had vanquished and took their women into their own family. Soon it became clear that the bigger the family, which was now referred to as a tribe, the more powerful and the more secure it was from the aggressive acts of others." He looked at me a bit ruefully, and then continued, "The tribes were increasing in size as the years and centuries went by. Some men set up as priests, but priests with a bit of political power, with an eye to the future! The priests decided that they had to have a sacred edict—what they could call a command from God—which would help the tribe as a whole. They taught that one had to be fruitful and multiply. In those days it was a very real necessity, because unless people 'multiplied' their tribe became weak and perhaps completely wiped out. So, the priests who commanded that the people be fruitful and multiply were even safeguarding the future of

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their own tribe. With the passage of centuries and centuries, however, it is quite clear that the population of the world is increasing at such a pace that the world is becoming overpopulated; there are more people than food resources justify. Something will have to be done about it."

I could follow all this, it made sense to me, and I was glad to see that my friends of the Pargo Kaling—the traders who had traveled so far and for so long—had told me the truth.

My Guide continued, "Some religions even now think that it is wrong indeed to place any limitation upon the number of children who are born, but if one looks at world history one sees that most of the wars are caused by lack of living space on the part of the aggressor. A country has a rapidly expanding population, and it knows that if it goes on expanding at this rate there will not be enough food, not be enough opportunity, for those of its own peoples. Thus they make war, saying they have to have living space!"

"Then, Honourable Lama," I said, "how would you deal with the problem?"

"Lobsang!" he replied, "the matter is easy if men and women of goodwill get together to discuss the thing. The old forms of religions, the old religious teachings were in every way suitable when the world was young, when people were few, but now it is inevitable—and it will be in time!—that fresh approaches be made. You ask what I would do about it? Well, I would do this; I would make birth control legal. I would teach all peoples about birth control, how it could be accomplished, what it was, and all that could be discovered about it. I would see that those people who wanted children could have perhaps one or two, while those who did not want children had the knowledge whereby children would not be born. According to our religion, Lobsang, there would be no offence in doing this. I have studied the old books dating back long long ages before life appeared on Western parts of this globe, for, as you know, life first appeared in China and in the areas around Tibet, and spread to India before going Westwards. However, we are not dealing with that."

I decided then and there that as soon as I could I would get my Guide to talk more about the origin of life upon this earth, but I recollected that now I was studying all I could on the matter of sex. My Guide was watching me, and as he saw that I was again paying attention he continued.

"As I was saying, the majority of wars are caused by overpopulation. It is a fact that there will be wars, there will always be wars, so long as there are vast and increasing populations. And it is necessary that there should be for otherwise the world would be absolutely overrun with people in the same way

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that a dead rat is soon completely overrun by swarms of ants. When you move away from Tibet, where we have a very small population, and you go to some of the great cities of the world, you will be amazed and appalled at the vast numbers, at the vast throngs of people. You will see that my words are correct; wars are utterly necessary to keep down the population. People have to come to earth in order to learn things and unless there were wars and diseases, then there would be no way whatever of keeping the population in control and keeping them fed. They would be like a swarm of locusts eating everything in sight, contaminating everything, and in the end they would finish themselves up completely.”

“Honourable Lama!” I said, “some of the traders who have talked about this birth control thing say that so many people think that it is evil. Now why should they think that?”

My Guide thought for a moment, probably wondering how much he should tell me for I was as yet still young, and then he said, “Birth control to some appears to be murder of a person unborn, but in our Faith, Lobsang, the spirit has not entered the unborn baby. In our Faith no murder can possibly have occurred, and anyhow it is, of course, manifestly absurd to say that there is any murder in taking precautions to prevent conception. It is just as well to say that we murder a whole lot of plants if we prevent their seeds from germinating! Humans too often imagine that they are the most wonderful thing that ever happened in this great Universe. Actually, of course, humans are just one form of life, and not the highest form of life at that, however there is no time to go into such matters as that for the present.”

I thought of another thing which I had heard, and it seemed to be such a shocking, such a terrible thing, that I could hardly bring myself to speak of it. However, I did!

“Honourable Lama! I have heard that some animals, cows for instance, are made pregnant by unnatural means. Is that correct?”

My Guide looked quite shocked for a moment, and then he said, “Yes, Lobsang, that is absolutely correct. There are certain peoples in the Western world who try to raise cattle by what they call artificial insemination, that is the cows are inseminated by a man with a great big syringe instead of having a bull do the necessary work. These people do not seem to realize that in making a baby, whether it be a baby human, a baby bear, or a baby cow, there is more than just a mechanical mating. If one is going to have good stock, then there must be love or a form of affection in the mating process. If humans were artificially inseminated, then it could be that, being born without love, they would be sub-humans! I repeat to you, Lobsang, that for the better type of hu-

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man or beast it is necessary that the parents shall be fond of each other, that they shall both be raised in spiritual as well as physical vibration. Artificial insemination, carried out in cold, loveless conditions, results in very poor stock indeed. I believe that artificial insemination is one of the major crimes upon this earth."

I sat there, with the evening shadows stealing across the room, bathing the Lama Mingyar Dondup in the growing dusk, and as the dusk increased I saw his aura flaring with the great gold of spirituality. To me, clairvoyantly, the light was bright indeed and interpenetrated the dusk itself.

My clairvoyant perceptions told me, as if I did not know before, that there I was in the presence of one of the greatest men of Tibet. I felt warm inside me, I felt my whole being throb with love for this, my Guide and tutor. Beneath us the Temple conches blared again, but this time they were not calling us, but calling others. Together we walked to the window and looked out. My Guide put his hand on my shoulder as we looked out at the valley below us, the valley now partially enveloped in the purple darkness.

"Let your conscience be your guide, Lobsang," said my Guide. "You will always know if a thing is right or if a thing is wrong. You are going far, farther than you can imagine, and you will have many temptations placed before you. Let your conscience be your guide. We in Tibet are a peaceful people, we are people of a small population, we are people who live in peace, who believe in holiness, who believe in the sanctity of the Spirit. Whereever you go, whatever you endure, let your conscience be your guide. We are trying to help you with your conscience. We are trying to give you extreme telepathic power and clairvoyance so that always in the future for so long as you live you can get in touch telepathically with great lamas here in the high Himalayas, great lamas who, later, will devote the whole of their time to waiting for your messages."

Waiting for my messages? I am afraid my jaw dropped with amazement; my messages? What was there so special about me? Why should great lamas be waiting for my messages all the time? My Guide laughed and slapped my shoulder. "The reason for your existence, Lobsang, is that you have a very very special task to do. In spite of all the hardships, in spite of all the suffering, you will succeed in your task. But it is manifestly unfair that you should be left on your own in an alien world, a world that will mock you and call you a liar, fraud and fake. Never despair, never give up, for right will prevail. You, Lobsang, will prevail!"

The evening shadows turned into the darkness of night, below us the lights of the City were atwinkle. Above us a new moon was peeping down at us

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over the edge of the mountains. The planets, vast millions of them, twinkled in the purple heavens. I looked up, thought of all the forecasts about me, all the prophecies about me, and I thought also of the trust and the confidence shown by my friend, my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup. And I was content.

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CHAPTER TEN

The Teacher was in a bad mood; perhaps his tea had been too cold, perhaps his tsampa had not been roasted or mixed exactly to his liking. The Teacher was in a bad mood; we boys sat in the classroom just about shivering with fright.

Already he had pounced unexpectedly upon boys to my right and boys to my left. My memory was good, I knew the Lessons perfectly; I could repeat chapter and verse from any part of the hundred and eight volumes of The Kangyur. "Thwack! Thwack!" I jumped about a foot in the air with surprise, and about three boys to the left and three boys to the right also jumped a foot in the air with surprise. For a moment we hardly knew which of us was getting the hiding, then, as the Teacher laid it on a bit harder I knew that I was the unlucky one! He continued his beating, muttering all the time, "Lama's favorite Pampered idiot! I'll teach you to learn something!"

The dust rose from my robe in a choking cloud and started me sneezing. For some reason that enraged the Teacher even more, and he really worked up into knocking more dust out of me. Fortunately, unknown to him, I had anticipated his bad mood and had put on more clothes than usual, so, although he would not have been pleased to know it, his blows did not disturb me unduly. In any case I was hardened.

This Teacher was tyrannical. He was a perfectionist without being perfect himself. Not only did we have to be word-perfect in our Lesson Work, but if the pronunciation, the inflection, was not exactly to his desire he would take out his cane, whip round to the back, and then whip us on our backs. Now he was getting some exercise, and I was nearly suffocating with the dust. Small boys in Tibet, like small boys everywhere, roll in the dust when they fight or when they play, and small boys completely cut off from all feminine influence do not always make sure that the dust is out of their clothing. Mine was full of

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dust and this really was as good as a spring clean. The Teacher went on thwacking away, "I'll teach you to mispronounce a word! Showing disrespect to the Sacred Knowledge! Pampered Idiot, always missing classes and then coming back and Knowing more than the ones that I've taught! Useless brat, I'll teach you, you'll learn from me one way or another!"

In Tibet we sit on the floor cross legged, most times we sit on cushions which are about four inches thick, and in front of us we have tables which may be from twelve to eighteen inches from the ground, depending on the size of the student. This Teacher suddenly put his hand forcibly on the back of my head and pushed my head down onto my table where I had a slate and a few books. Having me in a suitable position, he took a deep breath and really got busy. I wriggled just from habit, not because I was being hurt, because in spite of his most earnest endeavors we boys were toughened, we were almost literally "tanned into leather", and things like this were just an everyday occurrence. Some boy made a soft chuckle six or seven boys away to the right. The Teacher dropped me as if I had suddenly glowed red hot and leapt like a tiger onto the other boy. I was careful to betray no indication of my own amusement when I saw a cloud of dust arising a few boys down the line! There were various exclamations of pain, fright, and horror from my right, because the Teacher was hitting out indiscriminately, not being at all sure which boy it was. At last, out of breath, and no doubt feeling a lot better, the Teacher stopped his exertions. "Ah!" he gasped, "that will teach you little horrors to pay attention to what I am saying. Now, Lobsang Rampa, start again and make sure that you get the pronunciation perfect." I commenced all over again, and when I thought about a thing I really could do it well enough. This time I thought, and then I thought again, so there were no more hard feelings from the Teacher and harder thwacks on me.

For the whole of that session, five hours in all, the Teacher paraded backwards and forwards keeping a very sharp eye indeed upon all of us, and no provocation at all was needed for him to lash out and catch some unlucky boy just when he thought he was unobserved. In Tibet we have our day starting at midnight, it starts then with a Service, and of course there are regular Services at regular intervals. Then we have to do menial work in order that we may be kept humble, in order that we shall not "look down" on the domestic staff. We also have a period of rest and after that we go to our classes. These classes last five hours nonstop, and during that whole time the teachers were indeed making us learn thoroughly. Our classes, of course, lasted more than five hours a day, but this particular session, the afternoon session, lasted five hours. The hours dragged by, it seemed that we had been in that classroom for days. The shadows seemed scarcely to move and the sun overhead seemed as if rooted

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to one spot. We sighed in exasperation and with boredom, we felt that one of the Gods should come down and remove this particular Teacher from our midst, for he was the worst of them all, apparently forgetting that once, oh, so long ago! he too had been young. But at last, the conches sounded, and high above us on the roof a trumpet blared forth, echoing across the Valley, sending an echo back from the Potala.

With a sigh the Teacher said, "Well, I am afraid that I have to let you boys go now, but believe me when I see you again I shall make sure that you have learned something!" He gave a sign and motioned toward the door. The boys in the row nearest jumped to their feet and really bolted for it. I was just going as well but he called me back. "You, Tuesday Lobsang Rampa," he said, "you go away to your Guide and you learn things, but don't come back here showing up the boys that I have taught. You are being taught by hypnotism and other methods; I am going to see if I cannot get you kicked out." He gave me a cuff to the side of the head, and continued, "Now get out of my sight, I hate the sight of you here, other people are complaining that you are learning more than the boys whom I teach."

As soon as he let go of my collar I bolted too and did not even bother to shut the door behind me. He bawled out something but I was travelling too fast to go back.

Outside, some of the other boys were waiting, well out of earshot of the Teacher of course.

"We ought to do something about that one," said one boy.

"Yes!" said another, "somebody is going to get really hurt if he goes on unchecked like that."

"You, Lobsang," said a third boy, "you are always boasting about your Teacher and Guide, why don't you say something about the way we are ill-treated?"

I thought about it, and it seemed to me to be a good idea, for we had to learn but there was no reason why we should be taught with such brutality.

The more I thought about it the more pleasant it seemed; I would go to my Guide and tell him how we were treated, and he would go down and put a spell on this Teacher and turn him into a toad or something like that. "Yes!" I exclaimed, "I will go now." With that I turned and ran off.

I hastened along the familiar corridors, ascending up and so that I got nearer the roof. At last I turned into the Lamas' Corridor and found that my Guide was already in his room with the door open. He bade me enter and said,

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“Why, Lobsang! You are in a state of excitement. Have you been made an abbot or something?”

I looked at him rather ruefully, and said, “Honourable Lama, why are we boys so ill-treated in class?”

My Guide looked at me quite seriously and said, “But how have you been treated badly, Lobsang? Sit down and tell me what it is that is worrying you so much.”

I sat down, and commenced my sad recital. During the time I was speaking my Guide made no comment, made no interruption whatever. He allowed me my say, and at last reached the end of my tale of woe and almost the end of my breath.

“Lobsang,” said my Guide, “does it occur to you that life itself is just a school?”

“A school?” I looked at him as if he had suddenly taken leave of his senses. I could not have been more surprised if he had told me that the sun had retired and the moon had taken over!

“Honourable Lama,” I said in astonishment, “did you say that life was a school?”

“Most certainly I did, Lobsang. Rest awhile, let us have tea, and then we will talk.”

The attendant who was summoned soon brought us tea and enjoyable things to eat. My Guide partook of food very sparingly indeed. As he once said, I ate enough to keep about four of him! But he said it with such a twinkling smile that there was no offence implied or taken. He often teased me and I knew that he would never under any consideration say anything that would hurt another person. I really did not mind in the least what he said to me, knowing how well he meant it. We sat and had our tea, and then my Guide wrote a little note and gave it to the attendant to deliver to another Lama.

“Lobsang, I have said that you and I will not be at Temple Service this evening, for we have much to discuss, and although Temple Services are very essential things so, in view of your special circumstances, is it necessary to give you more tuition than average.”

He rose to his feet and walked across to the window. I scrambled to my feet too and went across to join him, for it was one of my pleasures to look out and see all that was happening, for my Guide had one of the higher rooms at the Chakpori, a room from which one could look out over wide spaces and see

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for long distances. Besides, he had that most enjoyable of all things, a telescope. The hours I spent with that instrument! The hours I spent looking away across the Plain of Lhasa, looking at the traders in the City itself, and watching the ladies of Lhasa going about their business, shopping, visiting, and just (as I put it) plain wasting time.

For ten or fifteen minutes we stood there looking out, then my Guide said, "Let us sit down again, Lobsang, and discuss this matter about a school, shall we? "I want you to listen to me, Lobsang, for this is a matter which you should have clear from the start. If you do not fully understand what I say then stop me immediately, for it is essential that you understand all this, you hear?"

I nodded to him, and then as a matter of politeness said, "Yes, Honourable Lama, I hear you and I understand. If I do not understand I will tell you."

He nodded and said, "Life is like a school. When we are beyond this life in the astral world, before we come down into a woman's body, we discuss with others what we are going to learn. Sometime ago I told you a story about Old Seng, the Chinaman. I told you that we would use a Chinese name because you, being you, would try to associate any Tibetan name with a Tibetan of your acquaintance. Let us say that Old Seng who died and saw all his past decided that he had certain lessons to learn. Then, the people who were helping him would look about to find parents, or, rather, prospective parents, who were living in the circumstances and in the conditions which would enable the soul which had been Old Seng to learn the desired lessons." My Guide looked at me and said, "It is much the same as a boy who is going to become a monk; if he wants to become a medical monk he comes to the Chakpori. If he wants to do perhaps domestic work, then no doubt he can get into the Potala for they always seem to have a shortage of domestic monks there! We choose our school according to what we want to learn."

I nodded, because that was quite clear to me. My own parents had made arrangements for me to get into the Chakpori provided I had the necessary staying power to pass the initial test of endurance.

My Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup continued, "A person who is going to be born already has everything arranged; the person is going to come down and be born of a certain woman who lives in a certain district and who is married to a certain class of man. It is thought that that will give the baby to be born the opportunities for gaining the experience and knowledge previously planned. Eventually, in the fullness of time, the baby is born. First the baby has to learn to feed, it has to learn how to control certain parts of its physical body, it has to learn how to speak and how to listen. At first, you know, a baby cannot focus its eyes, it has to learn how to see. It is at school."

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He looked at me and there was a smile on his face as he said, "None of us like school, some of us have to come, but others of us do not have to come. We plan to come, not for karma, but to learn other things. The baby grows up and becomes a boy and then goes to a classroom where often he gets treated rather roughly by his teacher, but there is nothing wrong in that, Lobsang. No one has ever been harmed by discipline. Discipline is the difference between an army and a rabble. You cannot have a cultured man unless that man has been disciplined. Many times now you will think that you are ill-treated, that the teacher is harsh, and cruel, but, whatever you think now, you particularly arranged to come to this earth in these conditions."

"Well Honourable Lama," I exclaimed excitedly, "if I arranged to come down here, then I think that I should have my brains examined. And if I arranged to come down here, why do I know nothing at all about it?"

My Guide looked at me and laughed—laughed outright. "I know just how you feel, Lobsang, today," he replied, "but really there is nothing that you should worry about. You came to this earth first to learn certain things. Then, having learned those certain things, you are going out into the greater world beyond our borders to learn other things. The Way will not be easy; but you will succeed in the end, and I do not want you to be despondent. Every person, no matter his station in life, has come down to earth from the astral planes in order that he may learn and, in learning, progress. You will agree with me, Lobsang, that if you want to progress in the Lamasery you study and pass examinations. You would not think much of a boy who was suddenly placed over you and by favoritism alone became a lama or an abbot. So long as there are proper examinations then you know that you are not being passed over at some superior person's whim or fancies or favoritisms." I could see that too, yes, when it was explained, it was quite a simple matter.

"We come to earth to learn things, and no matter how hard or how bitter the lessons which we learn on this earth, they are lessons for which we have enrolled before we came here. When we leave this earth we have our vacation for a time in the Other World, and then if we want to make progress we move on. We may return to this earth under different conditions, or we may move on to a completely different stage of existence. Often when we are in school we think that there is going to be no end to the day, we think that there is going to be no end to the harshness of the teacher. Life on earth is like that, if everything went smoothly for us, if we had everything that we wanted we should not be learning a lesson, we should just be drifting along on the stream of life. It is a sad fact that we only learn with pain and suffering."

"Well then, Honourable Lama," I said, "why is it that some boys, and

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some lamas too, have such an easy time? It always appears to me that I get hardships, bad prophecies, and beatings-up by an irritable teacher when I really have done my best."

"But, Lobsang, some of these people who apparently are very self-satisfied—are you sure that they are so self-satisfied? Are you sure that conditions are so easy for them, after all? Until you know what they planned to do before they came to the earth you are not in a position to judge. Every person coming to this earth comes with a prepared plan, a plan of what they want to learn, what they propose to do, and what they aspire to be when they leave this earth after sojourning in its school. And you say that you tried really hard at class today. Are you sure? Were you not rather complacent, thinking that you knew all there was to know about the lesson? Did you not, by your rather superior attitude, make the Teacher feel rather bad?"

He looked at me somewhat accusingly, and I felt my cheeks grow somewhat red. Yes, he really knew something! My Guide had the most unhappy knack of putting his hand on a spot which was tender. Yes, I had been complacent, I had thought that this time the Teacher would not be able to find the slightest fault with me. My own superior attitude had, of course, in no small measure contributed toward the exasperation of that Teacher. I nodded in agreement, "Yes Honourable Lama, I am as much to blame as anyone."

My Guide looked at me, smiled, and nodded in approval. "Later, Lobsang, you will be going to Chungking in China, as you know," said the Lama Mingyar Dondup. I nodded, dumbly, not liking even to think of the time when I should have to leave. He continued, "Before you leave Tibet we shall send to various colleges and universities for details about their instruction. We shall receive all particulars and we shall then decide which college or university will offer you exactly the type of training which you will need in this life. In a similar manner, before a person in the astral world even thinks of coming down to earth, he weighs up what he proposes to do, what he wants to learn, and what he finally wants to achieve. Then, as I have already told you, suitable parents are discovered. That is the same as looking for a suitable school."

The more I thought about this school idea the more I disliked it. "Honourable Lama!" I said, "why do some people have so much illness so much misfortune, what does that teach them?"

My Guide said, "But you must remember that a person who comes down to this world has much to learn, it is not just a matter of learning to carve, not just a matter of learning a language or reciting from Sacred Books. The person has to learn things which are going to be of use in the astral world after leaving the earth. As I have told you, this is The World of Illusion, and it is extremely

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well suited to teach us hardship and in suffering hardship, we should learn to understand the difficulties and the problems of others.”

I thought about all this, and it seemed that we had got onto a very big subject. My Guide obviously got my thoughts, for he said, “Yes, the night is coming upon us, it is time to end our discussion for this night for we have much to do yet. I have to go across to The Peak (as we called the Potala) and I want to take you with me. You will be there all night and all tomorrow. Tomorrow we can discuss this matter again, but go now and put on a clean robe and bring a spare with you.” He rose to his feet and left the room. I hesitated but for a moment, and that because I was in a daze!, and then I hurried off to array myself in my best, and to get my second best as my spare.

Together we jogged down the mountain road and into the Mani Lhakhang. Just as we passed the Pargo Kaling, or Western Gate, there was a sudden loud squall behind me that almost lifted me from my saddle.

“Ow! Holy Medical Lama!” yelled a feminine voice just to the side of the road. My Guide looked about him, and dismounted. Knowing my own uncertainties on a pony he motioned for me to remain seated, a concession which filled me with gratitude.

“Yes, madam, what is it?” asked my Guide in kind tones. There was a sudden blur of movement, and a woman flung herself to the ground at his feet.

“Oh! Holy Medical Lama!” she said breathlessly, “my husband could not beget a normal son, the misbegotten son of a she-goat!”

Dumbly, stunned at her own audacity, she held out a small bundle. My Guide stooped down from his great height and looked. “But, madam!” he remarked, “why do you blame your husband for your ailing child?”

“Because that ill-favoured man was always running around with loose women, all he thinks about is the opposite sex, and then when we get married he cannot even father a normal child.” To my dismay she started weeping and her tears ran down to hit the ground with little plops, just like hailstones, I thought, coming down from the mountains. My Guide looked about him, peering somewhat in the increasing darkness. A figure by the side of the Pargo Kaling detached himself from the darker shadows and moved forward, a man in a ragged dress and wearing a definitely hangdog expression. My Guide beckoned to him and he came forward, and knelt on the ground at the feet of the Lama Mingyar Dondup.

My Guide looked at both of them and said, “You do not right to blame each other for a mishap of birth, for this is not a matter which occurred be-

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tween you, but is a matter to do with karma.” He looked at the child again, pulling aside the wrappings in which the baby was swaddled. He looked hard, and I knew that he was looking at the infant’s aura. Then he stood up saying, “Madam! Your child can be cured, his cure is well within our abilities. Why did you not bring him to us earlier?”

The poor woman dropped to her knees again, and hastily passed the child to her husband, who took it as if it might explode at any moment. The woman clasped her hands, and looking at my Guide said, “Holy Medical Lama, who would pay attention to us, for we come from the Ragyab and we are not in favour with some of the other lamas. We could not come, Holy Lama, no matter how urgent our need.”

I thought all this was ridiculous, the Ragyab or Disposers of the Dead, who lived in the South-East corner of Lhasa were as essential as any in our community. I knew that because my Guide was always stressing that no matter what a person did, that person was still a useful member of the community. I remember once laughing heartily when he said, “Even burglars, Lobsang, are useful people, for without burglars there would be no need of policeman, hence burglars provide policemen with employment!” But these Ragyab; many people looked down upon them thinking they were unclean because they dealt with the dead, cutting up dead bodies so that the vultures would eat the scattered pieces. I knew, and felt as my Guide, that they did good work, for much of Lhasa was so rocky, so stony, that graves could not be dug, and even if they could, normally Tibet was so cold that the bodies would just freeze and would not decay and be absorbed into the ground.

“Madam!” commanded my Guide, “you shall bring this child to me in person three days from now; and we shall do our utmost to see that he is cured, for from this brief examination it appears that he can be cured.” He fumbled in his saddlebag and produced a piece of parchment. Quickly he wrote a message upon it, and handed it to the woman. “Bring that to me at the Chakpori and the attendant will see that you are admitted. I shall inform the gatekeeper that you are coming and you will have no difficulty whatever. Rest assured, we are all humans in the sight of our Gods, you have nothing to fear with us.” He turned and looked at the husband; “You should remain loyal to your wife.” He looked at the wife and added, “You should not abuse your husband so much; perhaps if you were kinder to him he would not go elsewhere for solace! Now, go to your home and in three days from now return here to the Chakpori and I will see you and assist you. That is my promise.” He mounted his pony again and we rode off.

Diminishing in the distance were the sounds of praises and thanks from

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the man of the Ragyab and his wife. "I suppose for tonight at least, Lobsang, they will be in accord, they will be feeling kindly disposed to each other!" He gave a short laugh and led the way up to the road to the left just before we reached the Village of Sho.

I really was amazed at this which was one of my first sights of husband and wife. "Holy Lama," I exclaimed, "I do not understand why these people came together if they do not like each other, why should that be?"

My Guide smiled at me as he replied, "You are now calling me 'Holy Lama'! Do you think you are a peasant? As for your question, well we are going to discuss all that on the morrow. Tonight we are too busy. Tomorrow we will discuss these things and I will try to set your mind at rest, for it is sorely confused!"

Together we rode up the hill. I always liked to look back down on the Village of Sho, and I wondered what would happen if I tossed a good sized pebble onto a roof or two; would it go through? Or would the clatter bring someone out thinking that the Devils were dropping something on them? I had never actually dared drop a stone down because I did not want it to go through the roof and through someone inside. However, I was always sorely tempted.

In the Potala we mounted the endless ladders— not stairways—ladders which were well-worn and steep, and at last we reached our apartments high up above the ordinary monk, above the storehouses. The Lama Mingyar Dondup went to his own room and I went to mine which was adjoining, by virtue of my Guide's position and by being his chela I had been allowed this room. Now I went to the window and as was my wont I looked out. Below us there was some night bird calling to its mate in the Willow Grove. The moon was bright now, and I could see this bird, see the ripples of water as its long legs stirred up water and mud. From somewhere in the quite near distance there came the answering call of a bird. "At least that husband and wife seem to be in harmony!" I thought to myself. Soon it was time to go to sleep for I had to attend the midnight Service, and already I was so tired that I thought that possibly in the morning I could oversleep.

In the afternoon of the next day the Lama Mingyar Dondup came into my room while I was studying an old book. "Come in with me, Lobsang," he said, "I have just returned from a talk with the Inmost One and now we have to discuss problems which are puzzling you." He turned and led the way into his own room.

Sitting in front of him I thought of all the things which were on my mind. "Sir!" I said, "why are people who marry so unfriendly to each other? I looked

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at the aura of those two Ragyab last night, and it seemed to me that they really hated each other; if they hated each other why did they marry?"

The Lama looked really sad for a few moments, and then he said, "People forget, Lobsang, that they come down to this earth in order to learn lessons. Before a person is born, while a person is still on the other side of life, arrangements are going ahead deciding what sort, what type, of marriage partner will be chosen. You should understand that a lot of people get married in what one might term the heat of passion. When passion spends itself, then the newness, the strangeness, wears off and familiarity breeds contempt!"

"Familiarity breeds contempt." I thought about it. Obviously people got married in order that the race might continue. But why could not people get together the same as animals did? I raised my head and asked that question of my Guide. He looked at me and said, "Why, Lobsang! You surprise me, you should know as well as anyone that the so-called animals often mate for life. Many animals mate for life, many birds mate for life, certainly the more evolved ones do. If people got together, as you say, just for the purpose of increasing the race, then the resulting children would be almost soulless people, the same in fact as those creatures who are born by what is known as artificial insemination. There must be love in intercourse, there must be love between the parents if the best type of child is to be born, otherwise it is much the same as just a factory-made article!"

This business of husband and wife really puzzled me. I thought of my own parents. My Mother had been a domineering woman, and my Father had been really harsh to us, his children. I could not summon up much filial affection when I thought of either my Mother or my Father. I said to my Guide, "But why do people get married in the heat of passion? Why do they not get married as a business proposition?"

"Lobsang!" said my Guide, "that is often the way of the Chinese and of the Japanese too. Their marriages are often arranged, and I must admit that Chinese and Japanese marriages are far far more successful than marriages in the Western world. The Chinese themselves liken it to a kettle. They do not marry in passion because they say it is like a kettle boiling and cooling off.

They marry coolly and allow the mythical kettle to come up to the boil, and in that way it stays hot longer!" He looked at me to see if I was following, to see if the matter was clear to me.

"But I cannot see, Sir, why people are so unhappy together."

"Lobsang, people come to earth as to a classroom, they come to learn things, and if the average husband and wife were ideally happy together then

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they would not learn, for there would be nothing to learn. They come to this earth to be together and to get on together, that is part of the lesson; they have to learn to give and to take. People have rough edges, edges or idiosyncrasies which jar and grate on the other partner. The grating partner must learn to subdue and perhaps end the annoying trait, while the partner who is annoyed must learn tolerance and forbearance. Almost any couple could live together successfully provided they learned this matter of give and take.” “Sir!” I said, “how would husband and wife be advised to live together?”

“Husband and wife, Lobsang, should wait for a favorable moment, and should then kindly, courteously, and calmly say what is causing them distress. If a husband and a wife would discuss things together, then they would be more happy in their marriage.”

I thought about this, and I wondered how my Father and my Mother would get on if they tried to discuss anything together! To me they seemed to be fire and water, with each one being as antipathetic to the other. My Guide obviously knew what I was thinking for he continued, “There must be some give and take, because if these people are going to learn anything at all, then they should be sufficiently aware to know that there is something wrong with them.”

“But how is it,” I asked, “that one person falls in love with another, or feels attracted to another? If they are attracted to each other at one stage why do they so soon cool off?”

“Lobsang, you will well know that if one sees the aura, one can tell about another person. The average person does not see the aura, but instead many people have a feeling, they can say that they like this person, or that they dislike that person. Most times they cannot say why they like or dislike, but they will agree that one person pleases them and another person displeases them.”

“Well, Sir,” I exclaimed, “how can they suddenly like a person and then suddenly dislike a person?”

“When people are at a certain stage, when they feel that they are in love, their vibrations are increased, and it may well be that when these two people, some man and some woman, have heightened vibrations they would be compatible. Unfortunately they do not always let it remain heightened. The wife will become dowdy, perhaps she will refuse the husband what is undeniably his right. The husband will then go out after some other woman, and gradually they will drift apart. Gradually their etheric vibrations will alter so that they are no longer compatible, so that they are completely antipathetic.”

Yes, I could see that, and it really did explain much, but now I returned to the attack! “Sir! I am most puzzled to know why a baby should live for per-

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haps a month and then die, what chance does that baby have of learning or paying back karma? It seems just a waste to everyone so far as I can see!”

The Lama Mingyar Dondup smiled slightly at my vehemence. “No, Lobsang, nothing is wasted! You are being confused in your mind. You are assuming that a person lives for one life only. Let us take an example.” He looked at me and then looked out of the window for a moment. I could see that he was thinking of those people of the Ragyab, thinking perhaps of their baby.

“I want you to imagine that you are accompanying a person who is getting through a series of lives,” said my Guide. “The person has done rather badly in one life, and in later years that person decides that he cannot go on any longer, he decides that conditions are just too bad for him, so he puts an end to his life; he commits suicide. The person therefore died before he should have died. Every person is destined to live for a certain number of years, days and hours. It is all arranged before they come down to this earth. If a person terminates his own life perhaps twelve months before he would normally have died, then he has to come back and serve the additional twelve months.”

I looked at him and visualized some of the remarkable possibilities which could come from that. My Guide continued, “A person ends his life. He remains in the astral world until an opportunity occurs whereby he can come down to earth again under appropriate conditions and live out the time he has to serve on earth. This man with twelve months, well, he may come down and be a sickly baby, and he will die while he is still a baby. In losing that baby the parents also will have gained something; they will have lost a baby but they will have gained experience, they will have paid back a little of what they had to pay back. We will agree that while people are on earth their outlook, their perceptions, their values, everything, are distorted. This, I repeat, is the World of Illusion, the world of false values, and when people return to the Greater World of the Overself then they can see that the hard, senseless lessons and experiences undergone during this sojourn on earth were not so senseless after all.”

I looked about me and thought of all the prophecies about me; prophecies of hardship, prophecies of torture, prophecies of sojourns in far and strange lands. I remarked, “Then a person who makes a prophecy is merely getting in touch with the source of information; if everything is arranged before one comes down to earth, then it is possible under certain conditions to tap that knowledge?”

“Yes, that is perfectly correct,” said my Guide, “but do not think that everything is laid out as inevitable. The basic lines are there. We are given certain problems, certain lines to follow, and then we are left to do the best we

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can. One person can make good and another person can fail. Look at it in this way; supposing two men are told that they have to go from here to Kalimpong in India. They do not have to follow the same path, but they have to arrive at the same destination if they can. One man will take one route and another man will take another route, depending upon the route which they take so will their experiences and adventures be affected. That is like life, our destination is known but how we get to that destination remains within our own hands."

As we were talking a messenger appeared, and my Guide, with a short word of explanation to me, followed the messenger down the corridor. I wandered again to the window, and rested my elbows on the ledge, supporting my face in my hands. I thought of all that I had been told, thought of all the experiences that I had had, and my whole being welled with love for that great man, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, my Guide who had shown me more love than my parents had ever shown me. I decided that no matter what the future would bring, I would always act and behave as if my Guide were by my side supervising my actions. Down in the fields below monk musicians were practicing their music; there were various "brumps-brumpsbrumps" and squeaks and groans from their instruments. Idly I looked at them, music meant nothing to me for I was tone deaf, but I saw that they were very earnest men trying hard indeed to produce good music. I turned away thinking that I would occupy myself once again with a book.

Soon I tired of reading; I was unsettled. Experiences were tumbling upon me faster and faster. More and more idly I turned the pages, then with sudden resolution I put all those printed sheets back between the carved wooden covers and tied the tapes. This was a book which had to be wrapped in silk. With inborn care I completed my task and set aside the book.

Rising to my feet I went to the window and looked out. The night was somewhat stuffy, still, with not a breath of wind. I turned, and left the room. All was still, still with the quietness of a great building which was almost alive.

Here in the Potala men had worked at sacred tasks for some centuries and the building itself had developed life of its own. I hurried along to the end of the corridor and scaled a ladder there. Soon I emerged on to the high roof, by the side of the Sacred Tombs.

Silently I padded across to my accustomed spot, a spot which was well sheltered from the winds which normally raced down from the mountains. Lying back against a Sacred Image, with my hands clasped at the back of my head, I stared out across the Valley. Tiring of that after a time, I lay back and looked up at the stars. As I watched I had the strangest impression that all those worlds above were wheeling around the Potala. For a time it made me feel

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quite dizzy, as if I were falling. As I watched there was a thin tracery of light. Becoming brighter, it exploded into a sudden burst of brilliant light. "Another comet finished!" I thought, as it burned itself out and expired into a shower of dull red sparks.

I became aware of an almost inaudible "shushshush" somewhere close by. Cautiously I raised my head, wondering what it could be. By the faint starlight I saw a hooded figure pacing backwards and forwards at the opposite side of the Sacred Tombs. I watched. The figure moved across to the wall facing the City of Lhasa. I saw the profile as he looked into the distance. The loneliest Man in Tibet I thought. The Man with more cares and responsibilities than anyone else in the country. I heard a deep sigh and wondered if He too had had hard prophecies such as I. Carefully I rolled over and crawled silently away; I had no desire to intrude, even innocently, upon the private thoughts of another. Soon I regained the entrance, and made my quiet way down to the sanctuary of my own room.

Some three days later I was present as my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup examined the child of the Ragyab couple. He undressed it and carefully viewed the aura. For some time he pondered upon the base of the brain. This baby did not cry or whimper, no matter what my Guide did. As I knew, small as it was, it understood that the Lama Mingyar Dondup was trying to get it well. My Guide at last stood up, and said, "Well, Lobsang! we are going to get him cured. It is clear that he has an affliction caused by birth difficulties."

The parents were waiting in a room near the entrance. I, as close to my Guide as his shadow, went with him to see those people. As we entered they prostrated themselves at the Lama's feet. Gently he spoke to them; "Your son can and will be cured. From our examination it is clear that at the time of birth he was dropped or knocked. That can be remedied; you need have no fear."

The mother trembled as she replied, "Holy Medical Lama, it is as you say. He came unexpectedly, suddenly, and was tumbled upon the floor. I was alone at the time."

My Guide nodded in sympathy and understanding; "Return at this hour tomorrow and I am sure you will be able to take your child with you, cured." They were still bowing and prostrating themselves as we left the room.

My Guide made me examine the baby carefully. "Look, Lobsang, there is pressure here," he instructed. "This bone is pressing upon the cord; you observe how the auric light becomes fan shaped instead of round." He took my hands in his and made me feel round the affected area. "I am going to reduce, to press out, the obstructing bone. Watch!"

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Faster than I could see, he pressed his thumbs in-out. The baby made no outcry; it had been too fast for him to have felt pain. Now, though, the head was not lolling sideways as before, but was upright as a head should be. For some time my Guide massaged the child's neck, carefully from the head down towards the heart, and never in the opposite direction.

On the following day, at the appointed hour, the parents returned and were almost delirious with joy at seeing the seeming miracle. "You have to pay for this," smiled the Lama Mingyar Dondup; "you have received good. Therefore you must pay good to each other. Do not quarrel or be at variance with each other, for a child absorbs the attitudes of the parents. The child of unkind parents becomes unkind. The child of unhappy, loveless parents is unhappy and loveless in its turn. Pay by kindness and love to each other. We will call upon you to see the child in a week's time." He smiled, and patted the baby's cheek and then turned and went out, with me by his side.

"Some of the very poor people are proud, Lobsang, they are upset if they have not money with which to pay. Always make it possible for them to think they are paying." My Guide smiled as he remarked, "I told them they must pay. That pleased them, for they thought that, in their best dress, they had so impressed me that I thought they were people with money. The only way they can pay is as I said, by kindness to each other. Let a man and woman keep their pride, their self-respect, Lobsang, and they will do anything you ask!"

Back in my own room I picked up the telescope with which I had been playing. Extending the shining brass tubes I peered in the direction of Lhasa. Two figures came quickly into focus, one carrying a baby. As I watched, the man put an arm around his wife's shoulder and kissed her. Silently I put away the telescope and got on with my studies.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

We were having fun. Several of us were out in the courtyard strutting around on our stilts, attempting to topple each other over. The one who could remain on the stilts impervious to the assaults of the others was the winner.

Three of us subsided in a laughing heap, someone had put his stilts in a hole in the ground and bumped into us, tripping us. "Old Teacher Raks was in a blue mood today all right!" said one of my companions, happily. "Yes!" cried another of the heap, "it should make one of the others go green with envy that he could get in such a mood and take it out on us without getting out of breath." We all looked at each other and started to laugh; a blue mood? Green with envy? We called the others to come off their stilts and sit on the ground with us, and then we started a new game. How many colours could we use in describing things? "Blue in the face!" exclaimed one. "No," I answered, "we have already had blue, we have already had a blue mood." So we went on, working up from a blue mood to an abbot who was in a brown study, and a teacher who was green with envy. Another referred to a scarlet woman he had seen in the market place in Lhasa! For the moment we did not know if that would apply because none of us were sure of what a scarlet woman was meant to be.

"I know!" retorted the boy to my right, "we can have a man who is yellow, he is yellow with cowardice. After all, yellow is often used to indicate cowardice." I thought about all this, and it seemed to me that if such sayings were common usage in any language, then there must be some good underlying cause behind it; that set me off in search of my Guide the Lama Mingyar Dondup.

"Honourable Lama!" I burst into his study in some excitement. He looked up at me not at all perturbed at my unceremonious entry. "Honourable Lama, why do we use colours to describe moods?"

He put down the book which he was studying and motioned for me to be seated. "I suppose you are meaning those common usage terms about a blue mood, or a man green with envy?" he queried.

"Yes," I answered in even more excitement, excitement that he should

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know precisely what I was referring to. "I really would like to know why all these colors are important. There must be something behind it!"

He looked at me and laughed again, retorting, "Well, Lobsang, you have let yourself in for another nice long lecture. But I see that you have been doing some strenuous exercise and I think that you and I might have tea—I was waiting for mine anyhow—before we go on with this subject." Tea was not long in coming. This time it was tea and tsampa, the same as any other monk or lama or boy in the whole of the Lamasery would be having. We ate in silence, I thinking about colours and wondering what the implication of colours would be. Soon we had finished our rather meager meal, and I looked at my Guide expectantly.

"You know a little about musical instruments, Lobsang," he commenced, "you know, for example, that there is a musical instrument much used in the West known as a piano. You will remember that together we looked at a picture of one. It contains a keyboard with a lot of notes on it, some black and some white, well, let us forget the black ones, let us imagine instead that we have got a keyboard perhaps two miles long—longer if you like—it contains every vibration which can be obtained on any plane of existence."

He looked at me to see if I was following, because a piano was a strange device as far as I was concerned. I, as my Guide had said, had seen such a thing only in pictures. Satisfied that I could perceive the underlying idea, he continued, "If you had a keyboard containing every vibration, then the whole range of human vibrations would be in perhaps the three middle keys. You will understand—at least I hope you will!—that everything consists of vibrations. Let us take the lowest vibration known to man. The lowest vibration is that of a hard material. You touch it and it obstructs the passage of your finger, at the same time all its molecules are vibrating! You can go further up the imaginary keyboard, and you can hear a vibration known as sound. You can go higher and your eyes can receive a vibration which is known as sight."

I jerked bolt upright at that; how could sight be a vibration? If I looked at a thing, well, how did I see? "You see, Lobsang, because the article which is being viewed vibrates and creates a commotion which is perceived by the eye. In other words, an article which you can see generates a wave which can be received by the rods and cones in the eye which in turn translates the impulses received to a portion of the brain which converts the impulses into a picture of the original article. It is all very complicated, and we do not want to go into it too thoroughly. I am merely trying to point out to you that everything is a vibration. If we go higher up the scale we have radio waves, telepathic waves, and the waves of those people who live on other planes. But, of course,

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I said that we are going to limit ourselves specifically to the mythical three notes on the keyboard which could be perceived by humans as a solid thing, as a sound, or as a sight.”

I had to think about all this, it was a matter which really made my brain buzz. I never minded learning, however, by the kind methods of my Guide. The only time I jibed at learning was when some tyrannical teacher was whacking away at my poor old robe with a thoroughly unpleasant stick.

“You ask about colours, Lobsang. Well, certain vibrations are impressed upon one’s aura as colours. Thus, by way of example, if a person is feeling miserable, if he is feeling thoroughly unhappy, then part of his senses will emit a vibration or frequency which approximates to the colour which we call blue, so that even people who are not clairvoyant can almost perceive the blueness, and so that colour has crept into most languages throughout the world as indicating a blue mood an unpleasant, unhappy mood.”

I was beginning to get the drift of the idea now but it still puzzled me how a person could be green with envy, and I said so. “Lobsang, by deduction you should have been able to reason for yourself that when a person is suffering from the vice known as envy his vibrations change somewhat so that he gives the impression to others of being green. I do not mean that his features turn green, as you are well aware, but he does give the impression of being green. I should also make it clear to you that when a person is born under a certain planetary influence, then he is affected more strongly by those colours.”

“Yes!” I burst out, “I know that a person born under Aries likes red!”

My Guide laughed at my eagerness and said, “Yes, that comes under the law of harmonics. Certain people respond more readily to a certain colour because the vibration of that color is in close sympathy with their own basic vibration. That is why an Aries person (for example) prefers a red colour because the Aries person has much red in his makeup and he finds the colour red itself pleasant to dwell upon.”

I was bursting to ask a question; I knew about these greens and blues, I could even make out why a person should be in a brown study, because when a person was concentrating on a particular form of study his aura perhaps would be irradiated with brown flecks. But I could not understand why a woman should be scarlet! “Honourable Lama!” I burst out, unable to contain my curiosity any longer, “why can a woman be called a scarlet woman?”

My Guide looked at me as if he was going to burst and I wondered for a moment what I had said which had caused him to nearly throw a fit with suppressed amusement, then he told me, kindly and in some detail so that in fu-

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ture I should not be so unclear on any subject!

“I want also to tell you, Lobsang, that every person has a basic frequency of vibration, that is, every person’s molecules vibrate at a certain rate and the wavelength generated by a person’s brain can fall into special groups. No two persons have the same wavelength, not the same wavelength identical in every respect, but when two people are near the same wavelength, or when their wavelength follows certain octaves of the other, then they are said to be compatible and they usually get on very well together.”

I looked at him and wondered about some of our highly temperamental artists. “Honourable Lama, is it true that some of the artists vibrate at a higher rate than others?” I inquired.

“Most certainly it is, Lobsang,” said my Guide, “if a man is to have what is known as inspiration, if he is to be a good artist, then his frequency of vibrations must be many times higher than normal. Sometimes it makes him irritable, difficult to get on with. Being of a higher rate of vibration than most of us he tends to look down on us lesser mortals. However, often the work that he turns out is so good that we can put up with his slight fads and fancies!”

I imagined this great keyboard stretching for several miles, and it did seem to me a strange thing if, in a keyboard stretching several miles, the human range of experiences would be limited only to about three notes, and I said so. “The human being, Lobsang, likes to think that he is the only thing in creation that is important, you know. Actually there are many many other forms of life besides humans. On other planets there are forms of life which are utterly alien to humans, and the average human could not even begin to understand such a form of life. On our mythical keyboard the inhabitants of a planet far far removed from this particular Universe would be right away at a different end of the keyboard from that of the humans. Again, people on the astral planes of existence would be higher up the keyboard, for a ghost who can walk through a wall is of such a tenuous nature that his own rate of vibrations would be high indeed although his molecular content would be low.”

He looked at me and laughed at my puzzled expression, and then explained, “Well, you see, a ghost can pass through a stone wall because a stone wall consists of molecules in vibration. There are spaces between every molecule, and if you can get a creature with molecules so small that they can fit between the spaces of a stone wall, then that particular creature would be able to walk through a stone wall with no obstruction whatever. Of course, the astral creatures have a very high rate of vibration, and they are of a tenuous nature, that is, they are not solid, which in its turn means that they have few molecules. Most people imagine that the space beyond our earth, beyond the edge of the

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air above us, is empty. That is not so, space has molecules throughout. They are mostly hydrogen molecules which are widely dispersed, but the molecules are there and they can indeed be measured in much the same way as can the presence of a so-called ghost be measured.” The Temple conches sounded, calling us once again to our Services. “We will talk about this again tomorrow, Lobsang, because I want you to be very clear on this subject,” said my Guide as we parted at the entrance to the Temple.

The ending of the Temple Service was the start of a race—a race to get food. We were all rather hungry for our own food supplies were exhausted. This was the day when a new supply of freshly roasted barley was available. In Tibet all monks carry a small leather pouch of barley which has been roasted and ground and which, by the addition of buttered tea, becomes tsampa. So we raced on, and soon joined the throng waiting to have their bags filled, then we went to the Hall where tea was available so that we could have our evening meal.

The stuff was terrible. I chewed at my tsampa and wondered if my stomach was wrong. There was a horrible, oily burnt taste to it, and I really did not know how I was going to get it down.

“Faugh!” muttered the boy next to me, “this stuff has been burnt to a frazzle, none of us will be able to cram it down!”

“It seems to me that everything has been spoiled in this lot of food!” I said. I tried a bit more, screwing up my face in anxious concentration, wondering how I was going to cram it down. In Tibet to waste such food is a great offence. I looked about me, and saw that others were looking about them! The tsampa was bad, there was no doubt about that. Everywhere bowls were being put down and that was a very rare occurrence in our community where everyone was always just on the point of hunger. I hastily swallowed the tsampa in my mouth, and something very strange about it hit me with unexpected force in the stomach. Hastily scrambling to my feet, and apprehensively holding my mouth with my hand, I bolted for the door . . . !

“Well Young man,” said a strangely accented voice as I turned back toward the door after having violently erupted the disturbing food. I turned and saw Kenji Tekeuchi, the Japanese monk who had been everywhere, seen everything, and done everything, and was now paying for it by way of periodic bouts of mental instability.

He looked sympathetically at me, “Vile stuff, isn’t it?” he remarked sympathetically, “I had the same difficulty as you and I came out here for the same reason. We shall have to see what happens. I am staying out for a few moments

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hoping that the fresh air will blow away some of the miasma which this bad food has caused.”

“Sir” I said diffidently, “you have been everywhere, and will you tell me why here in Tibet we have such dreadfully monotonous fare? I am sick to death of tsampa and tea, and tea and tsampa, and tsampa and tea. Sometimes I can hardly cram the muck down.”

The Japanese looked at me with great understanding and even greater sympathy. “Ah! So you ask me because I have tasted so many different kinds of food? Yes, and so I have. I have traveled extensively throughout the whole of my life. I have had food in England, Germany, Russia, almost everywhere that you can mention. In spite of my priestly vows I have lived well, or at least I thought so at the time, but now my dereliction from my vows has brought me to grief.”

He looked at me and then seemed to jerk to life again. “Oh! Yes! You ask why you have such monotonous fare. I will tell you. People in the West eat too much, and they have too great a variety of food, the digestive organs work on an involuntary basis, that is, they are not controlled by the voluntary part of the brain. As we teach, if the brain through the eyes has an opportunity of assessing the type of food which is going to be consumed, then the stomach can release the necessary quantity and concentration of gastric juices in order to deal with the food. If, on the other hand, everything is crammed down indiscriminately, and the consumer is busily engaged in idle talk all the time, then the juices are not prepared, digestion cannot be accomplished, and the poor wretch suffers from indigestion and later, perhaps, from gastric ulcers. You want to know why your food is plain? Well! The plainer and, within reason, the more monotonous the food one consumes the better it is for the development of the psychic parts of the body. I was a great student of the Occult, I had great powers of clairvoyance, and then I stuffed myself with all sorts of incredible concoctions and even more incredible drinks. I lost all my metaphysical powers, so that now I have come here to the Chakpori so that I may be attended, so that I may have a place where I can rest my weary body before leaving this earth. And when I have left this earth in just a few short months from now, the body breakers will do the job, will complete the task which an indiscriminate admixture of drinks and food started.”

He looked at me and then gave one of those queer jumps again, and said, “Oh yes, my boy! You take my advice, you stick to plain food for all the days of your life and you will never lose your powers. Go against my advice and cram everything you can down your hungry gullet, and you will lose everything, and your gain? Well, my boy, you will gain indigestion; you will gain

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gastric ulcers together with a bad temper. Oh ho! I am going off, I can feel another attack coming.”

The Japanese monk, Kenji Tekeuchi rose shakily to his feet and tottered off in the direction of the Lamas’ Quarters. I looked after him and shook my head sadly. I should very much have liked to have been able to talk to him much longer. What sort of foods were they? Did they taste good? Then I pulled myself up with a jerk; why tantalize myself when all I had before me was rancid buttered tea and tsampa which had been really burned so much that it was a charred mass, and in some way some strange oily compound had got into it. I shook my head and walked again into the Hall.

Later in the evening I was talking to my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup. “Honourable Lama, why do people buy horoscopes from the peddlers down on The Way?”

My Guide smiled sadly as he replied, “Of course, as you know, there cannot be any worthwhile horoscope unless it is individually prepared for the person to whom it is alleged to refer. No horoscope can be prepared on a mass production basis. The horoscopes sold by the peddlers on The Road below are merely so that they can get money from the credulous.” He looked at me and said, “Of course, Lobsang, the pilgrims who have these horoscopes go back home and show they have a memento from the Potala! They are satisfied and so is the peddler so why bother about them? Everyone is satisfied.”

“Do you think people should have horoscopes prepared for them?” I asked.

“Not really, Lobsang, not really. Only in certain cases such as your own case. Too often horoscopes are merely used to save a person the effort of adopting a course of action upon his own responsibility. I am very much against the use of astrology or horoscopes unless there is a definite, specific reason for it. As you know, the average person is like a pilgrim threading his way through the City of Lhasa. He cannot see the road ahead for the trees and the houses and the bends and curves in the road. He has to be prepared for whatever is coming. We here can look down upon the road and see any obstructions for we are at a higher elevation. The pilgrim, then, is like a person with no horoscope. We being higher in the air than the pilgrim are like people with the horoscope, for we can see the road ahead, we can see obstacles and difficulties, and thus should be in a position to overcome difficulties before they really occur.”

“There is another thing which is troubling me greatly, Honourable Lama. Can you tell me how it is that we know things in this life that we knew in the

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past?"

I looked at him most anxiously for I was always rather afraid of asking such questions as really I had no right to be delving so deeply into matters, but he took no offence; instead he replied, "Before we came to this earth, Lobsang, we mapped out what we intended to do. The knowledge was stored in our subconscious and if we could get in touch with our subconscious, as some of us can!, then we should know everything that we had planned. Of course, if we should know everything that we had planned there would be no merit in striving to better ourselves because we would know that we were working along a predetermined plan. For some reasons sometimes a person will go to sleep or will get out of the body while conscious, and will get in touch with his Overself. Sometimes the Overself will be able to bring up knowledge from the subconscious and transfer it back to the body on earth, so that when the astral body returns to the flesh body there is knowledge in the mind of certain things that happened in a past life. It may be as a special warning not to commit a mistake which may have been committed for life after life. Sometimes a person has a great desire to commit suicide, as just one example, and if a person has been penalized life after life for doing that, then frequently they will have a memory of something about self-destruction in the hope that such a memory will cause the body to refrain from self-destruction."

I pondered upon all this and then I walked to the window and looked out. Just below there was the fresh green of the swampy area and the beautiful green of the leaves of the willow trees. My Guide broke into my reverie.

"You like looking out of this window, Lobsang, does it occur to you that you look out so frequently because you find the green so soothing to your eyes?" As I thought about it I realized that I did instinctively see green after I had been working at my books.

"Green, Lobsang, is the most restful colour for the eyes. It gives ease to tired eyes. When you go to the Western world you will find that in some of their theatres there is a place called the green room where actors and actresses go to rest their eyes after having been subjected to smoke-filled stages and bright glaring footlights and floodlights."

I opened my eyes in amazement at this, and I decided that I would pursue this matter of colours whenever the opportunity presented itself. My Guide said, "I have to leave you now, Lobsang, but tomorrow come to me again because I am going to teach you some other things." He rose to his feet, patted me on the shoulder, and went out. For some time I stood looking out of the window looking out at the green of the swamp grass and the trees which were so restful to the eyes.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

I stood a little way down the path, looking down the mountainside. My heart was sick within me and my eyes were hot with the tears I dare not shed. The old man was being carried down the mountain. The Japanese monk, Kenji Tekeuchi, had “returned to his Ancestors.” Now the Disposers of the Dead were carrying his poor shriveled old body away from us. Was his Spirit even now wandering on a path lined with cherry blossoms? Or was he seeing the mistakes of his lifetime and planning his return? I looked down again before the men rounded a curve in the path. Looked down at the pathetic bundle that once had been a man. A shadow came over the sun, and for a time I imagined that I saw a face in the clouds.

Was it true, I wondered, that there were Guardians of the World? Great Spirit Guardians who saw to it that Man had suffering on Earth in order to live. Why, they must be like schoolteachers, I thought! Perhaps Kenji Tekeuchi would meet them. Perhaps he would be told that he had learned well. I hoped so, for he had been a frail old man who had seen much and suffered much. Or would he have to come down to the flesh again, reincarnate, so that he could learn more? When would he come? In some six hundred years, or now?

I thought of it; I thought of the service I had just left. The Service for Guiding the Dead. The flickering butter-lamps, flickering like the flames of a feeble life. I thought of the clouds of sweet-smelling incense which seemed to form into living creatures. For a moment I had thought Kenji Tekeuchi had come among us again as a living being instead of propped up before us as a wizened corpse. Now perhaps he would be looking at the Akashic Record, that indelible Record of all that has ever happened. Maybe he would be able to see where he had gone wrong and remember for when he came again.

The old man had taught me a lot. In his strange way he had been fond of me, talking to me as an equal. Now he was no more on the Earth. Idly I kicked

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a stone and scuffed my worn sandals in the ground. Had he a mother?

Somehow I could not imagine him as young, as having a family. He must have been lonely, living among us strangers, so far from his own land. So far from the warm breezes and his own Sacred Mountain. Often he had told me about Japan, and then his voice had grown hoarse and his eyes strange.

One day he had shocked me by saying that people probed into occult matters when they would be better off by waiting until they were ready, instead of trying to importune a Master. "The Master always comes when the Student is ready, boy!" he said to me, "and when you have a Master, do everything he says, for only then are you ready." The day was becoming duller. Clouds were forming overhead and the wind was beginning to whip up small stones again.

Below me, in the Plain, a small group of men appeared from the base of the mountain. Gently they placed their pathetic bundle on the back of a pony, mounted their own, and slowly rode off. I stared out across the Plain, until at last the small cortege vanished from my sight. Slowly I turned away and trudged up the mountain.

THE END

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